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# The champion of the Crescent

John Hackett

MALCOLM CAMERON LYONS and D.E.P. JACKSON

Saladin: The Politics of the Holy War  
456pp. Cambridge University Press.  
£25.  
0521 22358 X

Of all the outstanding figures in the history of the Crusades neither Zangi nor Nuraddin, none of the shadowy Caliphs, nor any of the Latin kings, princes or counts, none of the numberless emirs, not even Richard the Lionheart of England or St Louis of France, let alone Philip Augustus or Frederick Barbarossa himself, has attracted as much interest and attention as Al-Malik an-Nasir as-Sultan Salah-ad-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub, a man honoured, in the widely used westernized version of his name, as "Saladin". He has been much misunderstood and is probably not rightly understood even now. *Saladin: the Politics of the Holy War* (which includes eight maps, an index, admirable notes and a rich bibliography) makes a notable contribution to a fuller comprehension of one of the most remarkable figures of the Middle Ages. It is certainly the best book yet written about him in English.

Saladin was both by birth and standing in Islam no more than a middle-grade emir, respected and followed by others largely because he was more successful than they were. He was able, more clear-sighted, more astute. The grant of favourable terms to a beleaguered garrison might suggest generosity. It could also secure early possession of an important place and permit prompt further movement towards others. He was unwise to leave Tyre in Frankish hands in 1187, after the overthrow of the Latin Kingdom, giving Conrad of Montferrat a bridgehead of immense value in the Third Crusade. His swift movement through the Frankish fortresses of the north, however, mostly secured quickly by generous terms to their garrisons, removed bases invaluable to the sort of land expedition expected under Barbarossa. If he had foreseen that the main thrust of the Frankish relief expeditions would be seaborne, beyond the power even of his strengthened Egyptian navy to stem, Saladin would have acted differently over Tyre. His judgment was not always faultless. But he was of a

generous and personally unselfish disposition and well aware that honesty was good policy. He also knew that compassion, to which he was not disinclined when circumstances allowed his indulgence, could win high praise. When in 1176 he had secured the key fortress of A'zaz and thus separated his Nurid opponents in Aleppo from their allies in Mosul, Nuraddin's little daughter came and asked for the castle back. He readily gave it to her, with generous and honourable treatment. (A'zaz, any way, was too far north for him to garrison effectively and its retrocession had already been covered by treaty.) Abu Shamah, however, records that when he was preparing the downfall of the Fatimid Caliphate in Egypt in the spring of 1174, daily crucifixions bore witness to a ruthless cruelty, and even a vindictiveness, which is difficult to reconcile with the opinions held of him by romantic admirers and his apparent opinion of himself. Later on in the same year, Christian prisoners in bonds were sent around cities to be slain as a public spectacle. Islamic divines were often invited to take a hand. Onlookers sometimes mocked their maladroitness and more expert executioners took over. Saladin is reported by 'Imad-ad-Din, his chief biographer and devoted partisan, to have watched such doings with quiet satisfaction.

What did Saladin seek? He used Egypt as a base to secure Syria, and Syria as a base to expand into the Levant. It can hardly be accepted any longer that he formed a power base only to eject the Frankish unbelievers from Jerusalem and destroy the Christian presence in the Levant. His strict Qur'anic upbringing and his devotion to Islam are not in question, but there is room for doubt on the degree to which his life was dominated by them. Until he was thirty-one years old he lived a worldly life, one in which wine played a part. He never made the pilgrimage to Mecca, as his father Ayyub did in 1137. His concern for the recovery of Jerusalem from the unbeliever was clearly deep and genuine, but the contribution this would make to his own prestige was not unimportant, while undying hostility to the Trinitarian infidel is not easy to reconcile with the political flexibility which marked his dealings with the Franks. Religious zeal may not have been exclusively a cloak for expansionist policies, but it was certainly useful.

The good will of the Caliphate was more than useful. It was vital. Malcolm Cameron Lyons and D.E.P. Jackson's rich, but previously little used, source material offers abundant evidence of the care Saladin took to emphasize his subordination to the Commander of the Faithful. Coolness on the part of the Caliphate, however, was hardly surprising. Saladin's destruction in 1171 of the Fatimid Caliphate in Egypt gave satisfaction in Baghdad but also carried a warning. Nuraddin's opportune death in 1174, when he was clearly restless about the growth of Ayyubid power, gave Saladin his big opportunity. He used the power base he had established as Vizier in Egypt to challenge and finally overcome Nurid dominance in Syria. The next step was extension of power eastwards. The Caliphate had been reluctant to grant Saladin diplomas confirming tenure of holdings (such as Aleppo) taken from the heirs of Nuraddin. There was even greater reluctance to legitimize expansion eastwards into the Jezirah. Mosul remained staunchly pro-Zengid until the agreement of 1186, and the not unreasonable suspicion that Ayyubid power contained an implicit threat to the Abbasid Caliphate never completely abated. Whatever Saladin's ultimate purpose, he was clearly pursuing a policy of dynastic expansionism.

In England Sir Walter Scott's *The Talisman*, published in 1825, set a trend in the romanticization of Saladin which Lane Poole's high standard of scholarship left him with three-quarters of a century later curiously unable to correct. In other lands more closely connected with the medieval Middle East a tendency was already noticeable to create out of Saladin a figure more chivalrous, generous, honest and good than seemed possible for a successful leader in the circumstances of his time. Between two of the truly outstanding opponents in the twelfth-century Levant, Sultan Saladin and Richard I, King of England, there was a high regard on both sides which gave some grounds for Western romanticism. Contemporary sources, however, can be interpreted rather differently. The literary talents of 'Imad-ad-Din al-Isfahani and Baha ad-Din ash-Shabazz, two of the major sources for any biography of Saladin, are applied to a glorification of their master. Ibn al-Athir, writing with some sympathy for the Zengid cause, is often by

implication, and sometimes quite explicitly, more critical.

Western colonization in the Levant would scarcely have been conceivable without a degree of local fragmentation and disorder which at that time almost amounted to anarchy. To the Sunni Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad stood opposed a Shi'ite Fatimid Caliphate in Cairo. The Arab rulers in northern areas of the Fertile Crescent tended to acknowledge the authority of the first. In the South, particularly in those parts of Southern Syria contiguous to Egypt which we have in the past known as Palestine, sovereignty largely lay with the second. In the country in between, and to a large extent in those areas themselves, rival emirs jostled for power. The Eastern Roman empire, once possessor of most of the coast and much of the hinterland, still brooded beyond the Taurus, never unwilling to take a hand once more in the Syrian power game although the Emperor Manuel's crippling defeat at Myriokephalon in 1174 would do little more than confirm a decline evident since Manzikert a hundred years earlier. Armenian neighbours in the North-East could cause trouble. Rivalries between Italian maritime interests - Pisan, Venetians and Genoese, now moving in where Amalfitani were once supreme - caused instability and insecurity in Levantine ports. Bedu from the eastern deserts and Berbers from the Upper Nile brought danger across uncertain borders. Muslims in several varieties and Christians in several more, living in communities cheek by jowl with Jews, with conflicting ancient rights in the Holy City of Jerusalem, made up a hotchpotch under no single stable rule. The establishment of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, and the other crusading states at the end of the eleventh century, was in the situation by no means difficult. The Franks only added yet another belligerent and ambitious group to the kaleidoscope of patterns constantly re-forming in the Levant.

The Frankish colonies could last only as long as they were allowed to last, which would be as long as it would take to reconstitute a continuous, coherent, peripheral Muslim entity around them and direct it towards their removal. This, in effect, took up the whole twelfth century. Zangi did the ground-work in the north, his great son Nuraddin carried it forward nearly to

completion. Saladin, at first Nuraddin's subordinate, and then his rival and successor, rounded off the structure in Egypt to form a power base and applied it in a  *jihad*  to the elimination of the Latin Kingdom, the reconquest of Jerusalem and the reduction of the Frankish presence in the Levant to little more than a token. To regard this as Saladin's single dominant objective, however, would be as great an over-simplification as to see in the holy war no more than a cloak for self-aggrandizement. What can scarcely be doubted is that if Nuraddin, once he had recognized in Saladin's development of the Egyptian vizierate not a source of support but a threat, had not died in 1174, Saladin would hardly have been able to develop and exploit the coherent structure periphery under his own unified control in a way which made the downfall of Frankish colonization a certainty.

Seven and a half centuries later a remarkably similar situation developed on the surrender of the British Mandate over Palestine and Transjordan in 1948, when quite strongly established Jewish colonies occupying an area not very different from that of the Latin kingdom were threatened with obliteration by their Arab neighbours. Britain's Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field Marshal Montgomery, confidently predicted that the Arabs would easily drive the Jews into the sea. A much more obscure British officer, who had done some homework on the twelfth century, was requesting at the same time from Amman that since there was no coherent Arab periphery the Jews would probably be able to do what the Franks did and hang on, which they did. Nasser, with the United Arab Republic, tried to do again what Nuraddin had done, and failed. The Israeli State was able to consolidate and even to expand. The Arab chance had gone and a completely new situation has now emerged.

In spite of the wealth of hitherto unexploited source material used by the authors, and for all their carefully detailed analysis, Saladin remains a shadowy and enigmatic figure - much more so, for example, than that other Mediterranean giant, the near-contemporary Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II. Stupor mundi! The very abundance of the source material, welcome though it is, perhaps makes definite delineation more difficult. This book does not come down

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emphatically either on the side of the romantic vision of Sir Walter Scott, largely endorsed by Lane Poole and finding some support in the magisterial judgment of Sir Hamilton Gibb, nor yet on the frankly critical and not always friendly position of Professor Ehrenkruetz.

Saladin displayed beyond question personal qualities which marked him out as unusual among his peers and attracted wide respect, affection and esteem. He was a courageous fighter and an able field commander – if not in the first class. His capacity as an administrator in both military affairs and civil, though rather less, was amply developed and keenly tested during his formative years with Shirkuh, in Egypt, when he was acting for his uncle the Vizier from 1167 onwards as something like a chief of staff. He never suffered from the obstinacy, vanity and personal greed which blinded so many others of his kind.

Power, in the fragmented, unstable and often cruel world of the medieval Middle East was not won – and kept – by the exercise of chivalry, tolerance and magnanimity. These qualities, when manifested in the seats of power, marked their possessor out for especial regard but the securing and maintenance of power demanded others. Diplomatic, military and administrative skills were vital, ruthless determination and a driving ambition were essential, while a high capacity for low intrigue was also useful. In the hazy, distant world of twelfth-century Syria the Saladin of *The Talmud* would hardly have stood a chance.

The present reviewer, as a serving officer, rode and fought with Arab cavalry over much of the ground described in this book. The topographical exactitude displayed by its authors, the care taken over detail which very few readers are in a position to check, the soundness of judgment in matters of time, distance and the impact on events of weather, terrain and the season of the year, are all impressive. It is possible to differ on very small points of nomenclature, for example, or on what is visible from where at certain times of year and day, but the physical background against which the drama unfolds is faithfully represented and the interpretation of military action is generally sound.

Did Saladin use the holy war against the Franks and the sovereign requirements of the Caliphate as cloaks for a dynastic expansionism in which an Ayyubid future was the prime consideration? He pushed westwards from Egypt, threatening the Almohads in the Maghrib, and North-Eastwards as far as Latakia. Did he dream of an empire stretching from the Caucasus to Spain? The whole question of what Saladin was trying to do remains open. There is almost certainly no single answer. The Saladin enquiry has become of recent years a growth industry. This book, whose importance is unlikely to be eclipsed in the near future, opens new veins of material to be explored in its development.

## On and off the map

Robert Irwin

WILLIAM C. BRUCE (Editor)  
An Historical Atlas of Islam  
71pp, London: Brill,  
0 04 06116 9

Harold Macmillan recently remarked that Afghanistan was "like Clapham Junction. You can go north or you can go south." An examination of the relevant maps in *An Historical Atlas of Islam* only partially confirms the comparison. Ancient tracks converge and diverge according to a complex and uncertain timetable, but most of the through traffic, Arab, Turkish and Mongol, seems to have preferred to go East or West. The atlas aims to cover the Islamic lands – approximately from the Crimean to Berlin and from the seventh to the early twentieth century – in a single and detailed atlas, superceding its predecessors. Nevertheless, like its parent publication, the *Encyclopaedia of*

## Don John's day's work

Michael Mallett

JACK BEECHING  
The Galleys at Lepanto  
267pp, Hutchinson. £10.95.  
0 19 147920 7

Ever since Fernand Braudel reminded us thirty years ago, in his classic book *Le Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, of the continued importance of the Mediterranean to both the economic and political life of sixteenth-century Europe, despite the great age of extra-European discovery, there has been something of a revival of interest in the battle of Lepanto. United at the time as "the greatest day's work seen for centuries" the battle made an immediate and indelible impression on European culture. Celebrated in paint by Tintoretto and Titian, in verse and prose by Hernando de Herrera and Cervantes, in music by Gabrieli, the echoes of the great victory continued to resound. But to many subsequent historians it became an anachronism and an irrelevance; a battle fought at immense cost, with out-dated weapons, to no apparent purpose; a victory from which vanquished recovered more quickly than victors. Now, however, with the quarter-century behind us, with a renewed interest in sixteenth-century Venice and in Philip II's European policies, and a new awareness of the early impact of cannon on sea warfare inspired by Carlo Cipolla, John Hale and J. F. Guilmartin, we can look afresh at Don John of Austria's achievement on October 7, 1571.

Don John is the hero of Jack Beeching's latest book, but to see *The Galleys at Lepanto* as part of a new historical tradition is a little misleading. None of the more recent historical literature directly on the subject appears in the bibliography, and yet this does not really seem to matter. Beeching has written a splendid piece of popular history which captures the mood of the moment. He combines exciting narrative with highly effective character portraits and sets it all against a background of perceptive and reasonably accurate historical perspective and generalization. This is not just another book about a famous battle, but a panorama of fifty years of sixteenth-century history to which Lepanto forms a logical culmination. The complexities of the theme of Habsburg policy, rising Catholic Reformation fervour, Ottoman imperialism, spiralling inflation and economic tension, and intermittent self-interest are woven together to form the background against which the characters in the final drama are introduced and developed.

These characters are not just the captains who led the great fleets at Lepanto, although they are all paraded

with much interesting detail on their previous careers. In addition to Don John himself we meet Gianandrea Doria, the clever and devious Genoese entrepreneur who commanded the right wing of the Christian fleet and who alone among its leaders brought his richly caparisoned flagship through unscathed; Sebastiano Venier, the elderly but fiery Venetian lawyer and veteran sea captain; Marcantonio Colonna, the affable and shrewd Roman noble who led the papal contingent; and even Sir Thomas Stukeley, the English Catholic adventurer whose earlier exploits in Ireland are retold to explain his

presence on the great day. On the Turkish side it is Ochiai, the Calabrian fisherman turned Moslem corsair who had assumed the mantle of Barbarossa and Dragut and who alone among the infidel captains managed to survive to fight another day, who catches the eye. But Ali Pasha, son of the muezzin at the Imperial mosque and favourite of the harem intrigues, also plays his part.

However, it is the political and religious leaders who moved these pawns that command greater attention; Philip II of Spain, the spider of the Escorial, gloomily weighing up the balance between political



Showing their metal. In this illustration to an episode from the oriental Alexander-romance, the Copper City and its automaton inhabitants are overrun by the anthropomorphic but well-armed soldiers of Alexander. This legend is one of the many portrayed in *Mythology: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, edited by Richard Cavendish (303pp, Orbis, £16. 0 3513 076 1), a survey of the principal myths of the world.

Indeed find some assistance in this atlas, but he would be well advised to turn first to *The Times Atlas of World History* where the sites of the crucial battles of Calicut and Marj Dabiq and the approximate locations of the Agagomulu and Qaraqoyunlu are shown – all these features being missing in the Brill atlas.

A student of the Islamic response to the Crusades will find little to help him in the only map devoted to the subject, which straggles over a period of two centuries and tries to give the erroneous impression that Saladin overran the County of Edessa and captured Tripoli in the years 1187-89 and that the Battle of Hattin took place east of Lake Tiberias where there was no cartographic space for it to happen. Other maps are similarly damaged by an uncertainty as to whether to show a frozen moment in detail or, alternatively, give an impression of the flow of frontiers and armies over long periods of time. Opportunities have been missed in the map of the thirteenth-century Middle East. Neither the Baghdad campaign nor the movement of tribal confederations

Arabian peninsula are shown. In the century of Zahir al-Umar, Ahmad al-Jazzar, and the Druze lords of Lebanon, the appearance of Jerusalem and Nablus on the map is no compensation for the absence of Acre, Sidon and Beirut.

A consistent policy on the transliteration of place-names has been eschewed. If one is looking for any count on finding it on one or other of the maps – though not necessarily in the index. Thus we have Aleppo, Haleb, Halab, Halep, and Aydhob, Muskat, Maskat, Disirial, marks have been scattered over the place-names like fairy dust; there can be no justification for the recurrent placing of diacritical points under the R's of 'Makkah' (Allah Mecca or Mekka).

One welcomes the marking in green of the frontiers of the areas where they were produced and the routes by which they were transported. However, while the maps are well for the time, they are not as good as the

advantage and religious conviction at his lonely desk outside Maddid; Plus, fanatical reformer and crusader who never understood that balance and had recently excommunicated Queen Elizabeth; Sultan Selim the Sol, out for a quick victory to justify his unexpected succession to the great Suleiman achieved by harem intrigue; and his closest advisers Sokolli, the Grand Vizier, and Joseph Meas, the "Great Jew" whose personal vendetta against Venice was another piece in the jigsaw. Somewhat inappropriately, St Francis Borgia, the General of the Jesuits, also figures prominently among these actors; but although his part in the events was in fact peripheral, his career as Borgia descendant turned Jesuit ascetic is too good a story to be missed. Through it all strides Don John himself, acknowledged half-brother to Philip II but the real inheritor of the complicated idealism of the Emperor Charles V. At the age of twenty-four he had emerged as the only man who could hold together the disparate forces of the Holy League.

But it is not just the characters who stand out in this pulsating drama. Key events are recorded with a new freshness to fill in the background; the successful defence of Malta in 1566 is here to explain rising Christian enthusiasm and Turkish determination for revenge; the abortive revolt of the Moriscos in 1569 provides Don John with his previous experience of leadership and Philip II with his motive for committing himself, somewhat uncharacteristically, to a major enterprise against the Turks; the Turkish attack on Cyprus and the atrocities committed against Marcantonio Bragadin and his men fuel the resentment of the Venetians and the confidence of the Turks. Then there are the galleys themselves, feld, overcrowded social microcosms, but still supremely effective weapons if properly handled. Loaded with guns and supported by the great Venetian galleass gunships, they were outdated not in terms of military effectiveness but increasingly in terms of economic viability. The costs of this sort of warfare were becoming too great to be maintained by a fulling Mediterranean economy.

Of course, it is possible to dispute some of Beeching's emphases, although rarely his facts. His book breaks all the rules of modern historical writing: it revels in narrative, in anecdote, and in its characterization; it concentrates on high politics; it over-simplifies the historical causation; it neglects almost all the recent specialist literature; and yet it will do more to stimulate the historical imagination and enthusiasm of the average reader than all the writings of the *Annalists*. The book is most nearly approaches its intention and method, although not perhaps in subtlety, is Garrett Mattingly's *Defeat of the Spanish Armada*, and that is high praise indeed.

employed on the same principle that led an older generation of cartographers to fill up the blank spaces on their maps with figures or with sporting tritons and nereids. This Beirut's eighteenth-century liquor production and Java's appearance, but not the Lebanese silk industry in the eighteenth century, nor the overland silk route in the Middle Ages, nor the trade in slaves, fur and wood between the Golden Horde and Mamluk Egypt, and practically none of the trade routes in the eastern Mediterranean. This last omission is especially curious when one considers how much the researchers of Goitein, Ashtor, Watson, Raymond and others have revealed about Mediterranean commerce in comparison with what we know about trade with the Indies in the pre-modern period. Like a guide through a desert inhabited by hostile tribesmen, *An Historical Atlas of Islam* is a disappointing and potentially treacherous. What we really need is a second edition to replace the

### GEORGE GROZ

A Small Yes and a Big No: An Autobiography  
Translated by Arnold J. Pomerans  
246pp, Allison and Busby. £12.50.  
0 85031 455 0

In the second volume of his autobiography Elias Canetti has described how deeply George Grosz's drawings affected him when he first saw them in the early 1920s. Here, he felt, someone had precisely expressed what he himself had experienced during the post-war years: these drawings had a strength and a daring, a ruthlessness and a legitimate dreadfulness, which compelled admiration. Such works were extreme – but they conveyed a kind of truth that was necessarily absent from an art which mediated, weakened, explained. Grosz's characters, Canetti felt, really existed, more vividly even than their real-life models and originals; and when he visited Berlin in 1928 and met Grosz in person, his trust in the truthfulness of his vision was confirmed. He might feel frightened or threatened by Grosz's latest drawings and water-colours, might even agree with the many critics who found them "obscene" by contemporary standards. But this, Canetti knew, was no snide or sniggering obscenity; this was a major artist's true chronicle of what lay behind the "joyous" façade of Berlin's night-life.

Canetti's experience has been shared by many who never knew the Berlin of the 1920s at first hand. The arrogant officer, cowed recruits, the academics with Teutonic beards or duelling scars, fat-necked and pot-bellied bourgeois with sagging, over-dressed wives, officious policemen, pompous priests scornful of aseptic leanness, pimps and prostitutes, amputees and beggars, working-men and working-women heeded into factories, murderers and suicides – all the characters who confront one another and us in Grosz's brilliantly composed drawings and paintings – have indelibly affected the image most of us have of German life and times in the twentieth century. What after all, was Joel Grey in Bob Fosse's *Cabaret* if not a George Grosz drawing sprung to life?

Even if we know only Grosz's graphic work we cannot but be aware of the important part that the written word played in his art. Many of his best-known drawings and paintings include words we have to imagine spoken or sung (ranging from a laconic "k.v." – fit for military service – to the Christmas carol "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht") as well as innumerable instances of the lettering which is so essential a part of our city experience. A glance at the famous "Vision of New York" (1915) reveals, within the space of a few inches, such legends as "CHICAGO BEACH HOTEL", "GODFREY COMP. SINGFAT COMPANY THE BEST IMPORTERS DENVER EXPRESS PERMIT QUARTER NEW YORK HERALD ORIENTAL DANCING (sic) COME ON ALONG, JAMES TAYLOR. Add to this Grosz's many experiments with words in more meaningful sequence, in essays, poems, diaries or occasional no surprise that he should eventually have felt the need to supplement his graphic life's work with an autobiography. *Ein kleines Ja und ein grosses Nein* appeared in German in 1955, four years before Grosz's death. It is now made, as the publishers claim, "fully available in English for the first time".

Polly? One only has to open Uwe M. Schneede's *George Grosz. Der Künstler in seiner Gesellschaft* to find the sentences from the autobiography with which Schneede begins his account: "Was uns erzog, war im Grunde der schwarz-weiße Rührstock." It is unaccountably omitted from the corresponding passage on page 28 of this new English version. Nor is this a trivial omission; for a schoolmaster's cane painted in Germany's national colours seems to have been part of the composition of a painting, now lost which Grosz describes in a later chapter of his autobiography.

There are other mysteries about Pomerans's clear and idiomatic translation. Why is the *Proletkult* movement called "Prolekult" on the two occasions on which it is mentioned? The word is neither English nor German, and seems to make the worst of both worlds. What is a "Cinespalast"? Why, in the obligatory Goethe quotation, change Goethe's deliberate and meaningful comparative – "Amerika, du hast es besser" – into a superlative ("Amerika, thou fastest best")? Why is Grosz's Berlin publisher simply called "Wieland" throughout, without a hint ever in the text that he was in fact Wieland Herzfelde? What will those not acquainted with Berlinese drinking-habits make of the phrase "a glass of blond with a dash"? Here publishers and translator should have combined to give the reader a little more help.

A particularly attractive feature of *A Small Yes and a Big No* is the many line-drawings included in the text. Only eight of these are dated, however; and even where there is an explanatory caption, we are never told from which of Grosz's books or portfolios they come. As for the few plates which are included – most of these are all but useless, for one really cannot gain an adequate impression of Grosz's little-known American oils and water-colours from reproductions in black and white. Yet such an impression would seem to be important; for in the painter of the later pictures who speaks to us, who looks back from his American vantage-point at the German painter and draughtsman who had produced "Ecce Homo", "The Face of the Ruling Class", "Dedication to Oskar Panizza", "Daum Marries her Pedantic Automaton", "Pillars of Society" some three decades before.

And how utterly, how unexpectedly, different the Grosz of 1955 turns out to be from the Grosz of the twenties! The hate-and-rage-inspired artist who fixed Canetti's imagination can here be found condemning what he calls the "modern habit" of tearing away the veil drawn over the past "the better to show up the ugliness, the chaos, the chasm and the scores... The man who has so powerfully opposed proletarian suffering to bourgeois oppression and corruption now indulges in constant denigration of "the masses", whose taste in matters artistic is even worse than that of the bourgeois and whose stupidity and cruelty are (to say the least) no less virulent. The enthusiastic disciple of Futurism, the pioneer of Berlin Expressionism and Dada now declares, in all seriousness, that the artists whom he most wished to emulate in America were meticulous illustrators like Norman Rockwell. Grosz seems to have regressed, in his later years, to the boy who, in a small Prussian town he had once been, the boy who had admired nothing so much as the naturalistically painted kitsch of Eduard Gutzmer.

As so often happens in autobiographies, the most memorable passages concern the artist's early years and struggles. Grosz's description of how he learnt to see, and to reproduce what he saw in drawings, cannot but be of great interest to all admirers of his art. He chronicles vividly his boyhood activities in the provincial seclusion of Pomerania and the contrasting bustle of a proletarian district of Berlin; the influence exerted on his vision of the world by the sensational illustrations of penny-dreadfuls, fair-ground paintings, magazines ranging from *Fliegende Bilder* (with its cartoons and humorous illustrations) to the *Leipziger Illustrierte Zeitung* (with its memorable battle-scenes), his memorable importance of the adventures of Karl May and the picture-stories of Wilhelm Busch; the passing attraction of *art nouveau* and *legende*; the methods of various drawing-teachers within and without academies; and not least – in a chapter entitled "A Glimpse of the Thirteenth Room" – an episode that may have been the origin of his sexual obsessions patent in many of his most compelling works. These early chapters afford us as good an insight as we could hope to find into the making of one particular artist's style and vision. Especially

### S. S. Prawer

memorable is Grosz's constant demonstration of the way life seemed to him to conform to caricature. "Many of my teachers," he writes, "were odd characters, ridiculous drill-sergeant figures with barrel-shaped paunches, baggy trousers, collars askew and peculiar pince-nez. They were just like caricatures in pre-war issues of *Simplissimus*." A butcher the younger Grosz encountered seemed to him "a figure out of Gustave Doré". When Grosz glimpses the German Republic's Foreign Secretary, Gustav Stresemann, for the first time, he sees him as "the epitome of Germany, as imagined by certain French cartoonists"; but we have only to read the more detailed description which follows ("He had the bloated face of the former Corps student turned industrialist – a red-faced man with swollen veins, much too high blood-pressure, and small, bloodshot, puffy eyes") to recognize the vision characteristic of Grosz's own satirical drawings in the 1920s.

*A Small Yes and a Big No* has some interesting psychological observations on the rich patrons who bought drawings in which they themselves were savagely caricatured and who flocked to hear themselves abused and ridiculed in *The Threepenny Opera* or in Dada demonstrations. "Many rich people," Grosz reflects, "have had consciences and felt better once a budding Van Gogh has kicked their pants with his muddy boot." He has a fine eye for details of clothing and what they can tell us. When, during a visit to Russia, he meets Lunacharsky, he assesses his position among Russian revolutionaries by contrasting his "dainty little feet stuck into foppish black shoes with pointed patent-leather toes" with the feet of the "real worker type" next to him – feet "hidden in the coarse felt boots of the ordinary Russian soldier". There are memorable evocations of schools and army barracks, of Expressionist and Dada groupings, and satirical allusions to what could be made symbolically significant. Take this passage, for instance, which describes what passed for jazz in Berlin soon after the First World War.

It was in the Café Oranienburger Tor that I first listened to something like a jazz band. It was known as the "racket" and was not a jazz band in the proper sense but more like a Viennese palm-court orchestra that had suddenly gone mad. Two or three members of the band, wielding saws and cowbells, kept interrupting the general melodic line with rhythmic noises of their own while the band leader, known as "Mister Meshugge", carried on like a lunatic. He pretended to be quite out of control, and kept breaking his baton over his head. The poor fiddler over the head with his violin. Then he would seize the double bass and engage it in a grotesque duel; in the end he would fling the broken pieces into the audience, who screamed with delight as they flung them back at him.

Throughout this entire charade, waiters served the band with round after round of beer and schnapps, which helped lift their high spirits even higher. "Mister Meshugge" kept tearing the instruments out of the players' hands, danced, sang, jumped suddenly on to the grand piano and scratched himself like a monkey, grabbed a large glass of beer, pretended to be raising it in a toast to his enthusiastic public and then poured it with utmost dispatch into the trumpet of one of his hapless musicians. The audience, was convulsed with laughter at each new antic.

That evening in Oranienburger Tor I did not, of course, have the slightest idea that what I had just seen was a parody of what would one day be a reality, one in which another mad band-leader would conduct a dance of death, snatching instruments from his musicians' hands and belabouring their heads until they collapsed to the ground, until they would far surpass the applause lavished upon his harmless predecessor. The ghastly echoes of those ovals have not yet died away.

There can be few more memorable or more meaningful evocations of a type of entertainment whose later avatars we have all come to know so well.

The early chapters of *A Small Yes and a Big No* are full of similarly vivid passages; but half-way through the book Grosz seems to tire. His portraits of Brecht, Mehring and Tucholsky are disappointingly conventional, giving us nothing we cannot get from a dozen other works. Even his style deteriorates; on occasions it comes to resemble that of the penny-dreadful on which he had nourished his imagination in his early years: "It was", he writes, "as if some hidden power had flung out a poisoned dart at random and that this dart, with unerring instinct and the speed of lightning, had made straight for the person of Hermann Berthold Schulz". The chapters describing his years in America, from 1933 until 1954, show nothing of the organizing power of earlier ones: they degenerate into a series of anecdotes, interspersed with distressing anti-modernist and anti-democratic diatribes. Even his recollection of the pictures he had once painted becomes dim after a certain point. Here, for instance, is his recollection of a picture that has now been lost.

My mood was reflected in a large political painting, which I called *Germany: A Winter's Tale*, after the poem by Heinrich Heine. In the centre a good old German burgher, fat and anxious, sat at a rather unsteady little table, on which lay cigar and morning newspaper. In the background I had placed the three pillars of society: Army, Church and School (the schoolmaster holding a black-white-and-red cane). The burgher himself was desperately clutching at his knife

and fork – the world was swaying about him. A sailor as a symbol of revolution and a prostitute completed my view of the times we lived in.

How strange that Grosz should have censored out of this description what even in photographs of the painting concerned seems one of its most striking (and most essential) features: Grosz's self-portrait in profile, clearly visible in the foreground on the lower left-hand side, with an expression of fiercest rage and what looks like a hole in his temple, as though he had fired a bullet into it.

Even these later pages, however, offer the patient reader some rewards – not least among them a hilarious account of Grosz's abortive attempt to find work in Hollywood, in the course of which he was interviewed by a tycoon called "Uncle Carl" and a professional smiler and backslider whose sole function it was to counteract the depressing effect the tycoon had on most of his clients. Who "Uncle Carl" might be will be no mystery to Hollywood-watchers: the rhyme

Uncle Carl Lummie  
Has a large facemlle

has, after all, travelled far beyond the charmed gates of Universal Studios.

"The reader must appreciate" Grosz warns us in his Preface, "that what I have not said I have chosen not to say." Indeed, the omissions are glaring. We hear nothing, for example, of Grosz's private life once he had left his parents' house; his wife, the famous "Daum" of his paintings, hardly figures in the narrative at all. He does not discuss the drinking problem which beset him in his later years and which was to be largely responsible for the accident that caused his death. The

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account of Grosz's Expressionist masters mentions Ensor, of course, but fails to find room for the painter and draughtsman whom most of us would count among the most powerful influences on his mature art: Ludwig Meidner. One only has to glance at Grosz's "Horseman of the Apocalypse" to appreciate the extent and power of Meidner's influence: the exploding world under the horse's hooves derives unmistakably from Meidner, whom Grosz knew well and who in fact introduced him to his later publisher Wieland Herzfelde.

George Grosz died a disappointed man. Driven out of Germany by the advent of Hitler, coming to an America which had fascinated him before he

ever set foot on its shores and which he continued to love *quand même*, he found his work difficult to sell, commissions slow to arrive and quick to dry up, and the official art-world unwilling or unable to appreciate the direction his genius had taken after his emigration from Germany. In these later years he dismissed the political stance he had taken in the Weimar Republic as "a jumble of cheap progressive phrases which I had picked up from others and which seemed to pour like honey from my lips"; he became a conservative in art as well as in politics, vehemently opposing abstract painting (he called it "a euphemism for Rohrschach blots combined with geometrical patterns"), seeking to render naturalistically the

"grasses and stems and sand-dunes perpetually moulded by the wind" which had fascinated him as a boy but had found no place in his mature satirical work. Are his later works really as dreadful as the textbooks suggest? Might not a painting like *Cain* (1937) — a detail is reproduced in black-and-white in *A Small Yes and a Big No* — or the stick figure sequence produced eleven or twelve years later, be worth seeing? Was the later Grosz, like the later de Chirico, a burnt-out case, a man who had lost touch with the deepest sources of his inspiration? Perhaps the publication of this autobiography in its new English dress will lead to a comprehensive retrospective exhibition that will allow us to judge for ourselves.

## Working for the workers

James Joll

JOHN A. MOSES

Trade Unionism in Germany from Bismarck to Hitler 1869-1933

Volume One 1869-1918

269pp, £ 86/43 450 8

Volume Two 1919-1933

289pp, £ 86/43 483 4

George Prior, £25 the set.

The German trade union movement in the Wilhelmian Empire and the Weimar Republic has been roughly treated by historians, both liberal and Marxist. It continues to be an object of attack by East German writers anxious to show that it was the trade unions which prevented the German Social Democratic Party from developing its revolutionary potential and becoming the true Marxist party that the present ruling party in East Germany is presumably supposed to be. Non-Marxist historians have argued along similar lines, though less polemically: according to this view it was the unimaginative bureaucrats in the trade unions who dominated the German labour movement in 1914 and were as eager to support the government in the war as they were ready in 1918 to check the development of a true socialist revolution. From these two failures of will or judgment or loyalty, it seemed to follow almost inevitably that the German trade unions were equally eager or unwilling to prevent the rise of Hitler.

John Moses, in what is the first substantial study in English of the German socialist trade unions, is concerned to make the case for the unions as a body which was genuinely trying to find a new framework for the German state in which the labour movement could achieve a measure of social justice by legal and constitutional means. The pressures of the German past and the nature of German society in the early twentieth century left them very little room for manoeuvre. "When this is appreciated," Moses writes, "there can be no reproach of failure or of self-destruction. At the most they were guilty of a degree of political naïveté which caused them to underestimate the nature of the enemy as well as their own political strength."

In the period down to 1918 (covered in Moses's first volume) the problem for the trade union leadership was to gain recognition of the most fundamental rights of organized labour; and even then their leaders were always afraid of losing what they had won at the hands of the government and the employers, who would have liked both the unions and the socialist party somehow to disappear. Thus even in their periods of numerical expansion, the union leaders felt themselves very much on the defensive, and were constantly aware of the potential limitations on their freedom of action and the dangers they would run if they embarked on the revolutionary course. Although they — and especially Carl Legien their undisputed leader from 1890 to 1920 — were never afraid of quoting Mephistopheles and saying to the ideologues of the Social Democratic Party "Grau, teurer Freund, ist alle Theorie", they were nevertheless to a large extent caught in the same theoretical dilemmas as the socialist political party to which a large number of their members belonged. Either they were working for a revolution and

the complete overthrow of existing society or else they were working for immediate benefits which, by removing causes of discontent, might be expected to prolong the life of the capitalist system. They were not always sure which.

John Moses has many interesting things to say about the various theoretical discussions in the trade unions. He suggests that their members were trapped both by their Lassallean and their Marxist inheritance. Lassalle's insistence on the iron law of wages — the view that the average wage can never, except for the briefest periods, rise above the level necessary for maintaining a bare existence and the power to reproduce the species — meant that trade-union activity intended to raise wages and living standards was pointless within the existing economic structure, and that it was only by gaining control of the state apparatus and transforming it so as to set up state-financed cooperatives that the workers could better their condition. It was therefore political organization and the political struggle that were all-important. Marx for his part wanted the best of both worlds. Trade unions were, as he wrote in 1865, "not only of the most extreme importance as a means of organizing the working class to fight with the bourgeoisie... but in Prussia and Germany at large the right of association, in addition to making a breach in the rule of a police state and bureaucratic despotism, destroys the master and servant regulations and the control of the feudal nobility in the country."

However, as Moses points out, a few months later Marx was stressing the problems which confronted the unions: "Trade unions work well as centres of resistance against the encroachments of capital," he said in his address to the 1865 Conference of the International. "They fall partially from an injudicious use of their power. They fall generally from limiting themselves to a guerrilla war against the effects of the existing system, instead of using their organized forces as a lever for the final emancipation of the working class, that is to say, the ultimate abolition of the wage system."

These were the terms within which the debate about the proper role of the unions and their relation to the socialist party was in one form or another, to be discussed at least until 1914. In practice, the political role of the unions in Germany was strictly limited by laws which forbade them to take part in party politics. Thus, during the 1890s, the Free Trade Unions established a strongly centralized organization, but it was one with no formal links with the Social Democratic Party. Indeed Carl Legien believed, as he put it, that "in the economic struggle all forces need to be concentrated without enquiring as to the political creed of the individual." In any case there was plenty of scope for action in favour of individual reforms — notably the campaign for the eight-hour day — and if this was to be successful then, as Legien stressed, it was very similar to Bernstein's: "the final goal of socialism is nothing, the movement is everything" — "Die Organisation ist alles."

For the Social Democratic Party and many of the trade unionists themselves, the unions were also a school in which the workers would learn the meaning of class consciousness and the experience of the class struggle. It was to the ranks of the organized labour in the unions that the socialist politicians looked for their mass support, and consequently the

influence of those trade-union leaders who were prominent in the SPD became greater still, as Carl Schorske showed some thirty years ago in his *German Social Democracy 1905-1917*. Moses covers much the same ground in his account of the debate on the general strike which was discussed at length in the SPD's conferences of 1905 and 1906, when it seemed to many on the left of the party that the Russian revolution of 1905 had demonstrated the effectiveness of the mass strike as a means of starting and carrying forward the revolution. The so-called Mannheim Agreement, reached at the 1906 party congress, in practice put an end to such revolutionary romanticism and declared "The trade unions are indispensable for the raising of the status of workers in bourgeois society. They are not of secondary importance to the Social Democratic Party which has to lead the struggle in the political sphere for the elevation of the working class and for its equality of rights with the other classes of society." For all the Marxist revolutionary rhetoric of some of the party leaders, the Mannheim Agreement firmly established that the party's practice would be reformist and that the challenge to existing institutions, however much the conservatives overestimated it for their own purposes, would be a slow and gradual one.

When one looks at the development of trade-union and Social Democratic practice as analysed by Moses, it comes as no surprise that in the crisis of July 1914 the trade unions were even quicker than the Social Democratic Party to rally to the support of the government. It was a move which, however much it may have seemed to subsequent critics a betrayal of international working-class solidarity, brought immediate advantages, since it established that the unions would be recognized partners in the task of running the war economy. It represented a decisive step, to use the language of Dieter Groh's definitive work on the German Social Democratic Party before 1914, from negative to positive integration.

From this much followed: the resolutely unrevolutionary stance of the trade-union leadership in 1918 and the extensive formal recognition of the trade unions in the constitution of the Weimar Republic. At last, or so it had a taste in the maintenance of the order. And indeed it seemed in 1920 when Carl Legien, at the moment of the attempted right-wing coup by Kapp and Lüttwitz, led his followers in a general strike — a tactical method which he had firmly repudiated under the Wilhelmian Empire — as though the unions were indeed ready to fight to preserve the republic. Yet these gains were in vain: the unions had not managed to win any of the reforms they had hoped in 1918; their plans for "economic democracy" came to nothing; the sensible proposals put forward in January 1932, for an event unheeded. By 1932 the number of the unemployed in Germany had risen to over 30 per cent of the work force and over 43 per cent of trade-union members; and the size of union membership had dropped according to Theodor Leipart, who held Legien's old post of chairman of the Central Commission of the Trade Unions, accepted perhaps too willingly that no resistance was possible either to Papen's dismissal of the socialist



"State Functionary for the War Wounded (Grey Day)" (1921) is an oil painting by George Grosz; reproduced from *Art in Our Times: A Pictorial History 1890-1980* by Peter Setz (590pp, with 1,603 illustrations, Thames and Hudson, £30, 0 500 2336 0). This large volume is a "comprehensive survey of Modern Art in which illustration plays a special role, as the author explains in his preface: "... instead of adhering to the older methods of categorizing modern art as a sequence of movements, I decided to bring the unique aspect of each work into focus by means of visual juxtaposition. The usual historian's pigeonholes are eschewed in favour of comparative study arranged, in the case of painting and sculpture, according to theme, and, for architecture, by building type. Neither still nor chromatic photography is included in the survey. Each pair of facing pages illustrates and discusses a particular theme — sculpted heads of children, for example. In addition, each chapter covers a single decade, and provides a synoptic table as well as an introduction 'to place the artistic developments within its general cultural framework'.

government of Prussia in July 1932 or to the establishment of Hitler's government six months later. Moses argues convincingly that this was not the result of a deliberate sell-out nor of secret collaboration with the Nazis, but rather of the fact that the unions were never politically or economically as free as they believed. Their integration into the state made action against that state very difficult; and to the last they hoped to remain a recognized element in Hitler's new order, as a letter from Leipart to Hitler in March 1933 shows in which Leipart asserted his belief that "the social functions of the trade unions must be fulfilled regardless of the nature of the régime."

Dr Moses has given a full and useful account of the relations between the Free Trade Unions, the Social Democratic Party and the German state. The book is, however, not quite what its title implies: it is not a history of trade unionism in Germany, but rather one of the theory and practice of the Free Trade Unions. It says practically nothing about the other, non-socialist, unions, particularly the Catholic unions which, although their membership was only about a quarter of that of the Free Trade Unions, were a considerable importance in certain areas and an essential element in any coordinated working-class action. Stephen Hickey has pointed out, only 40 per cent of the miners were members of any union at all. There is also nothing about the role of other organizations such as the *Deutsche Beamtenschaft* and the *Federations of Salaried Employees*, whose separate existence may have contributed to the overall weakness of the trade-union movement. We are also left with many unanswered questions about the Free Trade Unions themselves. How were they financed and what funds did they have at their disposal? How far did they withhold funds from local groups if they were disappointed (as Dick Popen's dismissal of the socialist

drives one into the unlikely position of agreeing with the Kaiser who, as the best of his biographers tells us, once said to the head of his secretariat, "I get reports only, but now and then a funny story"). He has performed an important service for students of modern German history in providing a comprehensive survey of an interesting and neglected field and setting up a constitutional, ideological and political framework within which further research into the social history of the German trade unions can and, it is to be hoped, will be pursued.

HAMID ENAYAT

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FOUAD AJAMI

The Arab Predicament: Arab Political Thought and Practice Since 1967

220pp, Cambridge University Press, £12.50, 0 521 23914 1

At first glance these two books have a good deal in common. Both deal with aspects of political thought in the contemporary Middle East. Both are written by political scientists of Shi'i background who have migrated from the Middle East to universities in the English-speaking West. Both are reasonably short, seeking to illuminate a vast subject by a series of spotlights rather than to describe or even summarize it comprehensively.

Yet they are very different, and even though both authors write at some length about "fundamentalism", without offering a definition of that contentious word, there is almost no overlap in the actual ideas and thinkers they discuss. Both seem to attach a positive value to Western notions of freedom, progress, nationalism, democracy and socialism, and to feel that on the whole the Muslim world would benefit if it could integrate (or discover) these within its own culture. Beyond that they part company, revealing personalities and preoccupations in total contrast.

Hamid Enayat died this summer at the age of forty-nine. An obituary in *The Times* described him as "a man uniquely qualified, by family background, education, and the breadth of his experience of Islam, to explain to the English-speaking world the nature and probable direction of the Islamic movements of today." "Uniquely" is perhaps too strong, but it is true that no obviously superior candidate springs to mind. One could wish, perhaps, that in addition to the

three qualifications mentioned he had had a greater capacity to synthesize his material into a broad, coherent picture, a willingness to simplify in order to reach a wider audience, a greater boldness in stating and arguing a point of view. But certainly that is a good summary of what, in this book (tragically the only one he published in English), and numerous lectures and articles, he tried to do: to explain the nature and direction of Islamic movements.

Scholars of Muslim background writing and teaching in the West tend either to be apologists for Islam or to be largely ignorant about and uninterested in it outside a specific political or social context. Enayat is exceptional in being profoundly, even passionately, interested in Islam in its own right, yet capable of writing about it with scholarly detachment. To describe his work as apologetic would be insulting and wrong. But it is informed by, and derives its vitality from, a sense of commitment. He was keenly aware of the richness and diversity of Islamic thought, and wanted to share that awareness with others. He was, personally, a victim of the Islamic revolution in Iran, which obliged him to live in exile and caused him endless anxiety about his family and friends. He was rightly horrified by many of the forms which it took. But what pained him most, perhaps, was the caricature vision which it engendered of Islam, of Shi'ism, of Iran, and indeed of itself. He wanted it to be seen and understood in its intellectual context; he wanted to explain the subtlety and originality, as well as the explosive force, of the ideas that went into it.

That is the essential theme of *Modern Islamic Political Thought*. But although the book is presented as a self-contained work, and was actually published some weeks before his death, it gives the strong impression of being unfinished, or at least of being the first volume of two or more. The last chapter, entitled "Aspects of Shi'i modernism", ends abruptly, in the middle — as it seems — of a discussion of recent changes in the interpretation of the martyrdom of the Imam Husain, undoubtedly a crucial point, if not the crucial one, in the ideology of the

## Modernism in motion

Edward Mortimer

Iranian revolution. A substantial part of this discussion is devoted to the interpretations of Sunni modernists. Only four pages before the end of the book does Enayat embark on "the Shi'i revisionist literature on Husayn", with the amazing statement that "works under this heading are few and far between, especially when compared with the Sunni literature". In fact he discusses only one of them, *The Immortal Martyr*, by Nizam al-Din al-Jafar-abadi, after which, on the last page of all, there is just half a paragraph on the use of the Hussein theme by Khomeini. The ideas of the Mujahidin-i Khalq and of Ali Shari'ati, referred to earlier in a section on Islamic interpretations of socialism, are not mentioned in this context at all. Indeed the book contains no reference anywhere to Ahmad Reza'i, the chief theorist of the Mujahidin, whose work *The Movement of Husain* anticipated both Jafar-abadi and Shari'ati in developing the theme of Husain as revolutionary hero rather than symbolic martyr.

Enayat concludes by listing a number of issues raised in the debate within the orthodox religious hierarchy which followed the publication of Jafar-abadi's book, and leaves us with the bald statement: "But these are issues which should be discussed on another occasion" — rather as though they would be the topic of next week's lecture. Alas, we are not destined to hear it. Nor shall we have the benefit of Enayat's guidance through the further developments in Islamic thought which must even now be under way. But we can at least be grateful for the present work. Enayat has explained to us, as probably no one else could have, how Sunni and Shi'i thought have interacted with each other, and how the attempt to grapple with the problems of the modern world has brought them closer together.

In theory, that is. But, according to Foad Ajami, "underneath it all, the Sunnis and Shiites in Iraq were after all Sunnis and Shiites; no ideological pretension of any kind would bridge that gap". Ajami is not much interested in Islam or Islamic ideas as such. He too is a refugee from political upheaval — he was born in South

Lebanon — but from the social and intellectual climate in the Arab world, one senses more than from any physical danger. He has frequented American universities since the 1960s, and clearly feels quite as much at home there — probably more so — than Enayat did at Oxford. His speciality is telling his fellow Arabs what a hopeless lot they are; only he does it in English, and Americans just love to listen in.

Certainly, if there are any pro-Arab romantics still lurking on either side of the Atlantic, *The Arab Predicament* is a recommended cure. The version it gives of Arab history in the last fifteen years can be roughly summarized as follows: The defeat of 1967 devastatingly exposed the hollowness and bankruptcy of the pan-Arabist "revolutionary" movements — mainly Nasserism and Ba'athism — which had dominated the Arab political stage since the previous defeat, that of 1948. It describes the verve of the radical reaction: this time there would be real revolutions, not just the régimes but all the empty verbiage and feeble compromises would be got rid of, and the Palestinian *fidayin* were going to show the way. And so they did, all the way to Black September 1970 when they came up against the hard reality of King Hussein's bedouin army, whose soldiers could not read Marxist tracts but knew that the king who paid their wages was descended from the Prophet, and wanted no truck with unbelief. So the old order proved stronger than the new: an age of pragmatism dawned, in which Egypt and Syria took money from the oil states and built mosques, set about training their armed forces seriously, and adopted moderate, realistic political objectives; and so came October 1973, when God smiled on the religious pragmatists, and the oil price went up. Henry Kissinger came running and it seemed as if everything was going to be all right — the Arabs were going to show everyone what a civilized, respectable nation they were. Only somehow they couldn't quite agree how to do it; and then they found themselves behaving in a very uncivilized way in Lebanon; and then Egypt went off on her own; and people began to wonder whether they really were Arabs, and if so what it meant;

and then religion itself turned out to be rather dangerous and difficult to control. So now we have the prospect of Islamic revolution and getting back to our own authentic culture. But Ajami is sceptical about this: it will turn out to be just as much of an illusion as all the other "quick fixes" that have already been tried. Ajami does not like religion very much. His main criticism of Arab political culture is that even the would-be secular ideologies and leaderships that it produces are in reality as much based on superstition and dogma and hieratic authority as any brand of "fundamentalism". One point he does have in common with Enayat is a degree of admiration for Ali Abd al-Raziq, who was condemned by the shaikhs of al-Azhar in the 1920s for arguing that Islam did not entail any particular set of principles and that Muslims were free to choose whatever form of government they liked.

At present such ideas seem further than ever from being accepted. It is hard to finish Ajami's book feeling optimistic about Arab politics, but possible to finish it wondering whether one should be thinking about "Arab politics" at all. Although he shares the general Arab contempt for Sadat's style and his shallow, rootless idea of "civilization", Ajami argues that Sadat's withdrawal from the Arab front should not be seen as a personal aberration but reflected a general disillusionment with the idea of Arab unity, not confined to Egypt. He cites a survey carried out among undergraduates at Kuwait University which showed they identified far more with Islam, and with their particular Arab states, than with the idea of "one Arab nation" or "Arab brotherhood". Even the Palestinians, he suggests, learned from their clashes with Jordan and Syria and from the anarchy of Lebanon how important it is in this hard world to have a state of your own, and that is why their energies are now concentrated on getting one, rather than on earlier, more romantic goals, such as pan-Arab revolution or the liberation of all Palestine.

The book is full of such insights and aphorisms: not to be swallowed whole, but many of them worth chewing over.

## Calling for Santa Claus

Malcolm Yapp

STANLEY WOLPERT

Roots of Confrontation in South Asia: Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and the Superpowers

222pp, Oxford University Press, £10.50, 0 19 502994 1

The argument of *Roots of Confrontation in South Asia* may be stated in the following way. United States policy in South Asia exhibits all the sensitivity and delicate surefootedness of a bull in a china shop. In particular it pays little heed to cultural features and political rivalries which derive from long historical experience. A better understanding of the past could lead to the adoption of a different policy. Hence Stanley Wolpert proceeds to describe the past and to draw the outlines of a new policy for adoption by the United States.

As befits a man who has successfully combined the careers of novelist and historian, Wolpert's account of the past is brightly written. For some readers his account may be too bright and they may feel that the Black Hole "lock-up" and "Bob" Clive are taking popularization too far. Historians may also complain of his cavalier way with the facts of history. The "British East India Company" and "Russian" Uzbekistan are solecisms; the story of Charles Napier's one-word telegram "Pecay" (I have sinned), allegedly sent after his unscrupulous conquest of Sind, is a good one, but untrue; 4000, not 16,500, were killed in a modern politician.

British Indian troops perished during the retreat from Kabul in 1842 — and the Viceroy, Lord Lawrence, can hardly be described as a Scot, since he was born in Yorkshire of a Northern (Scots) Irish family. More serious are errors of judgment such as a stereotyped picture of Muslim civilization and a gross over-estimate of the value of India to Britain which culminates in the absurd suggestion that the present problems of the British economy derive from the loss of India. It betrays a man who complains that others have not learnt the lessons of history that he should ensure that the lessons are worth learning.

The implication that some historical lessons may not be worth learning prompts a wider question raised by this book and by similar studies of the "roots" of other contemporary problems. It is arguable that social, economic, political and technological changes during the twentieth century have made history into a poor guide to today's world. We may take an obvious example. In discussions of the strategic implications of recent events in Afghanistan we are frequently reminded, as in this book, that the Indian sub-continent has often been invaded from Afghanistan, and we are left to deduce that we should expect a repetition if we do not take adequate means of precaution against such an eventuality. But the truth is that the factors which made past invasions possible do not now exist, and it is arguable that a Soviet invasion then talking about a Soviet invasion then Russia has never invaded India. A healthy scepticism concerning the alleged lessons of history may be no bad thing in a modern politician.

If we leave history aside for the moment we can examine Wolpert's criticisms of US policy on their merits. He argues that the decision to draw Pakistan into the Dulles containment system was a grave blunder because India rightly perceived that the weapons supplied to Pakistan might be turned against herself. The American error was compounded by Nixon in 1971 when the United States leaned towards Pakistan in the conflict with India, and Reagan seems now to be repeating the folly by siding with guerrillas and the Soviet-backed régime in Afghanistan. There is little doubt that Wolpert is right in contending that his country's policies helped to drive India into reliance on the Soviet Union, although he leaves out of account one important factor, namely China. To India, Pakistan alone presents little menace; it is the Sino-Pakistan alliance which induces India to look to the USSR for help. The two circumstances which could end Indo-Soviet friendship, a Sino-Indian Soviet rapprochement, or a Sino-Pakistan settlement, it is hardly likely that the United States would think that India was worth the former, and the Soviet Union is currently doing its unintended best to bring about the latter event. The resolution of the matter would scarcely seem to be wholly within American control.

Wolpert's own recommended United States policy for South Asia is an alliance with any state but lots of economic aid for all; in short, a Santa Claus policy. Curiously enough, if there is one policy for which no historical argument exists it is this one. The Santa Claus policy is based entirely on first principles and a liberal

faith in the future. Economic aid brings material benefits which smooth away conflicts caused by deprivation and lead towards a liberal Utopia. At the heart of that Utopia is liberty. "Our commitment must be to freedom and the first article of our political faith, self-determination," writes Wolpert. And so we come back to those nineteenth-century irreconcilables, liberalism and nationalism, now combined with an irrelevance,

prosperity. One man's self determination tends to be another man's loss of freedom, and the recent past suggests that rapid increases of prosperity increase the appetite for self-determination rather than for freedom. This book will present Europeans with a familiar dilemma: which is worse — a liberal or a conservative America? One bull in a china shop is bad but imagine another bull trying to put the place together again.

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# Seeking to sanctify

Peter Avery

ANNEMARIE SCHIMMEL  
As Through a Veil: Mystical Poetry in Islam  
359pp. Columbia University Press.  
\$35.75.  
0 231 05246 4

Although these five lectures on Muslim mystical poetry were given for the American Council of Learned Societies in its History of Religions Series, they are a welcome addition to the history of literature as much as of religion; an up-to-date blend of the scholarship both of the historian of Persian literature, E. G. Browne, and of R. A. Nicholson, who, besides writing a history of Arabic literature, was a prolific student

of Islamic mysticism or Sufism - and, like Annemarie Schimmel, looked at contemporary poetical exponents of it as well as classical. She takes this all-embracing approach to Islamic literature further than most earlier scholars and, later in time, has more to notice. She does it comprehensively, because of her wide knowledge of both the dialects and the courtly idiom of all the main Muslim tongues, and because she is so much at home among the derishs of the Indian sub-continent. Knowledge of works on religion in a variety of non-Islamic languages is combined with that of Sufism to make her book an introduction to Sufism as well as to its remarkable literature; but in a series of lectures some details of the study of Sufism inevitably fall by the wayside. An annotated anthology

of Sufi quotations about the "fulness of the Godhead" sufficiently avoids "philosophy" to leave unanswered some of the questions the theologians, called by one of her Sufi poets the "grammarians of religion", might ask. Instead, what Sufism means to those who have attempted to express their intimations is given with an integrity and amplitude of learning to which seventy-five pages of notes and thirty-five of bibliography handsomely attest. Islamic dogmatics aim to legislate for every aspect of the human condition, but it is only with its Sufi dimension that Islam comes closer to catering for the promptings of the human heart, and it is a boon to have such a guide as this to what in Islam must always evoke response wherever hallowed life is the quest.

As in all else Islamic, Arabic was the first medium of expression and Arabs the pioneers of Sufism. The first lecture is appropriately on Arabic mystical poetry. It is salutary for anyone steeped in the major Persian canon to be reminded that the topoi and, excepting the *mathnawi*, principal verse-forms were first produced in Islam's sacred language. If other evidence were lacking, an early non-Sufi Persian poet's

I have brought four things, Lord. Your treasury lacks: I have brought existence, non-existence, asking forgiveness and sin.

might suggest that the "impudence" (*gustakhi*) of Sufi personal and castigator apostrophes of God was purely Persian. But it turns out to have featured initially in the sayings of Arab mystics, notably Hallaj (d. 922), who was in this a model for the Persians. His "attempt to rehabilitate Satan" was bolder than anything Persian. Before Ibn al-'Arabi intellectualized the concept of the One-ness of Being, for Hallaj, unity of Being exonerated Iblis of the crime attributed to him in the Koran (11.32), of disobeying God's command to the Angels to bow down to Adam, His Vicegerent on earth and knower of the secrets of His creatures (G. 11.19). To obey such command would have abrogated the greatest command of all, that only God should be adored.

Unfortunately the opportunity this context provides, to discuss the Sufi's stress on Man's superiority to the Angels, due to his special Covenant with God - the Covenant Sufis refer to as *Alast* - is not taken. It might have been, because it is related to an aspect of Sufism not emphasized but implicit throughout the book's quotations: the extraordinary humanism of this anti-carnal but at the same time all-comprehending teaching. In the anti-carnal context it must be noted that, though in its progress the book includes most of the important Sufi terms and has an Index of Technical Terms, more needs to be said about *hafa*, the carnal spirit or "lower self" and its hostility to what the Persians call *divine*, the divine in Man to which the Divine calls, a word omitted from both the text and index. It may also be said that the lectures prompt enquiry into so much that their purpose, either as a literary study, which they mainly are, or as a study of Sufism in depth, becomes obscured, as is likely when the greatness of the Sufi theme precludes much discussion of the *inter-referential*, though Professor Schimmel's comments on patterns and calligraphy tantalizingly hint that she could say more on the latter. The impression is left that, limited by the lecture form, she was frustratedly unable in the end to say sufficient either on Sufism or on the intrinsic nature of its expression. It is, as it were, suppressed copiousness of her learning that makes gaps in the book the more glaring, and the book is too important for some of them to be ignored.

Though more pointedly mentioned in the lecture on "Mystical Poetry in the Vernaculars" near the end of the book, her treatment of the Persian Sufi use of the word *ma'ad*, man, given in the second lecture, "Classical Persian Mystical Poetry: needs attention; the word implies during the pilgrimage the brave, the chivalrously gallant and a generosity which knows no withholding. It is about fighting 'the good fight'. The crucial role of the undaunted in man's quest to regain

sanctity might also have been more strongly emphasized where, in the masterly lecture on Rumi, allusion is made to Koran, verses 27 and 28. In full, verse 28 says, "Return to thy Lord, approving and approved". The Sufi use of this means more than simply "disappearing into the eternal abyss", and the verse from Rumi cited, with its pun on "hand-clapping/foam-raising", speaks of the dynamic tension involved in the rediscovery of grace; a tension explained by the words omitted in the author's Note giving the Koranic verse, *approving and approved*. For they imply freedom of choice, as well as being chosen, in the "trustful soul" God addresses in the preceding verse. Hence, though the problem of free will is one of the most difficult in Islamic Studies, in this instance the author missed the opportunity to show that Sufism is less nihilistic than has often been supposed.

The issue of the "cruelty" implicit in many Sufi descriptions of the spirit's torment and lover's sacrificial craving, with its masochistic element, is not neglected, but discussion of the Sufi's social role and the frequent appalling vicissitudes their world suffered is. Since Sufism was often animated by social distress and political turmoil this avoidance of environmental factors is regrettable, especially in a work most of whose quotations from the poetry -

The droning spindle moans God, O God!  
The trembling and shaking in fear of the Lord.

- are about the need to know life's sacredness. There are teachers who never tire of reiterating that even Sufi poets were "political animals". Cruel images were part of everyday experience. 'Attar's recurrent military imagery, the ubiquitous references to blood, of which more must be said, his maimed and executed prisoners, come as no surprise in the works of one whose home was twelfth and thirteenth-century Nishapur; but is this from Francis Thompson surprising?

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!  
My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me.

The burden of Sufism's immense literature leaves little room for the drawing of parallels between Muslim and Christian mystical utterance, but it is gratifying to see how handy *The Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse* has proved. While discussion of the nature of Islamic society seems to have been avoided, the essential task of demonstrating the Koran's centrality to Sufism is well accomplished. Sufism is not so much unorthodox as ultra-orthodox. It carries Koranic insistence on monotheism to its logical conclusion, as reference to Hallaj's "heresy" (nearby, perhaps, Milton's) tends to show. Stress on the unity of Being has also engendered the charge of pantheism, which is skillfully rebutted in this book. But the Sufi's ultra-orthodoxy perturbed both the mundane, moderately orthodox; the Establishment, and the fundamentalist, suspicious alike of allegorical interpretations and antinomianism. The Sufi was persecuted by combinations of both, on political, as well as doctrinal grounds. Yet he discovered in the Holy Book and Muhammad's dream all the seeds of sanctity, and the final, exquisite revelation of why Man had been cast among the steeples and valleys of this world.

Well elucidated is the way the perceptive can "ascend" holiness in the world. Sufi poetry is psychologically accurate in portraying the evocative power of smell. The western searcher for inspiration in this kind of poetry must not be put off by its earliness. It is composed in lands where heaven seems very close to an earth however married, and where certain dichotomies nurtured in the West are unknown. Rumi's epiphany-poem is cited. That of Hafiz of over a century later might have been added for the verse:

Sit at the head of my tomb with wine and minstrel,  
For me to rise from the grave at the scent of you, dancing.  
The world had to be sanctified when it

smelt of God. The smell of blood could also be blessed. Rumi, addressing the friend who was the surrogate for The Friend, said,

When, as if I were a dog, blood is offered me,  
I'd be a fool not to see it as a draught for nobles.

Blood is made holy in Christianity too and, though it is not entirely overlooked, in a lecture which so much enlarges our understanding of Rumi (d. 1273), more might have been said about the influence on him of his Anatolian environment. He is cited as having said "Love is free from the narrowness of the prayer-niche and the cross", and to think of the Turco-Christian ethos of Asia Minor is to remember the close association between Sufi Orders and frontier armies with their forts, called *ribat*, a word which also came to mean Sufi hospice. Professor Schimmel remarks on the fact that folk mystical poems were often composed for missionary purposes, but discussion of Sufism's predominance among soldiers and on frontiers does not follow. She would doubtless agree that this is a topic for research, but not one this book could encompass.

Also in the lecture on vernacular mystical verse, a ball that looked as if it had escaped over the boundary is retrieved - but only just - when we are told that the guiding elder, the *Pir*, became firmly established through folk poetry, the medium which seems to have ensured the continued liveliness of Sufism in North Africa and the Indian Sub-Continent. But more prominence ought to have been given to the emphasis that poets of the classical tradition, in particular 'Attar, give to the function of the *Pir*, without whose guidance nothing can be gained. It is only in the last two lectures that light is thrown on the subject of the Sufi's regard for exemplars: there the significance of those exordia in which 'Attar excelled, concerning Lives of the Prophets and, above all, Muhammad, becomes clear.

One of the most important lectures as well as most original is, in fact, the last, on the praises of the Prophet Muhammad. It seems that the Muslim's desire to follow the Prophets as emblems of perfection indicates a greater readiness to acknowledge God's fall from grace than is evident in the West. Hence the yearning for leaders who, through devotion and recognizing their wretchedness, have progressed nearer than others to God; hence too, the special veneration felt for the Prophet of Islam, Seal of Prophecy, so perfect that he could commune with God more closely than Gabriel or Moses. Humility in confessing sin and acknowledging our fallen state are the hallmarks of all great religions and are initial requisites of the Sufi Path. Otherwise the idea of returning would have no meaning. This return is the way of health. It is also that of hope; the most moving passage, 'Attar's *Manjima's Tale* ("Parliament of Birds"), one of the most momentous in all Sufi literature, is that in the story of Sheikh San'an, when Muhammad appears as both the instigator and harbinger of God's forgiveness, His compassion for His creatures.

The author observes that the westerner "rarely realizes" what special sanctity Muhammad has for the Muslim. The answer to this must be that her book is, after all, an enriching introduction to the universal appeal of Islam, but the Sufi's messages of the power of love and the Divine Compassion. Whether, or not, the westerner is "tinged with centuries-old prejudices", he does not often come across this aspect of Islam. No doubt Ayyatullah Khomeini's heart is fully informed of *Islam's* mystical philosophy, of which he has been a celebrated teacher; but the heart is hidden and actions speak for themselves. This book's greatest value is as an instructive and readable reassertion of that Islamic dimension which prevents a Faith that is also the Law from degenerating into a Code of Conduct, or worse, a slogan for fanatics. Jesus abrogated Pharisaical formalism. Muslims are taught to revert him as a Prophet. Sufis also see him as one of their exemplars.

## FICTION

# Haughty falconry and collective guilt

Bill Buford

GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ  
Chronicle of a Death Foretold  
Translated from the Spanish by Gregory Rabassa  
122pp. Cape. £5.95.  
0 224 01950 2

Gabriel García Márquez has repeatedly expressed his surprise at being so insistently regarded as a writer of fantastic fiction. That exotic or "magical" element so characteristic of his work is, by his account, not really his own achievement. It is merely the reality of Latin America, which he has faithfully transcribed in more or less the same way that he might write about film, say, an ordinary article written for a daily newspaper. On a number of occasions, in fact, Márquez has said that for him there is no real difference between the writing of journalism and the writing of fiction - both are committed to the rigours of realistic representation - and his own ideal of the novel involves as much reportage as imagination. Viewed in this way, Márquez can be seen as an inspired tropical reporter for whom the strange Colombian world - with its prescient prostitutes, benevolent ghosts, and an eccentric magician who refuses to die - is just his everyday journalist's "beat".

## A new throw at the old game

Idris Parry

HERMANN HESSE  
Pictor's Metamorphoses and other Fables  
Translated by Rika Lesser  
213pp. Cape. £7.50.  
0 224 00253 0

In the last story of this collection Hesse remarks that "our imagination is a always satisfied with the most plausible explanation". Without this explanation there would presumably be no imagination. Fantasy is an objection to the limits of logical understanding. All nineteen pieces in this book are fantasies, chosen by Theodore Ziolkowski from a half century of Hesse's writings. Some are tales of magic in the style of the Brothers Grimm or *The Arabian Nights*; at the other extreme we find social satires in which prevalent and objectionable trends are exaggerated to appear fantastical. All are perfectly representative of an author whose fictional heroes, from Demian to Harry Haller in *Steppenwolf* and Josef Knecht in *The Glass Bead Game*, are aware of the plausible explanation and reject it in favour of dream.

Hesse includes in one of his later stories published here a fairy-tale written when he was ten. It is his first known piece of prose composition, and it sets the tone for the "soul biographies" (his term) which are his collected works. In every case the illogical starts from known life. In the first story of this volume, "Lulu", he introduces himself and his early Tübingen friends in transparent disguise. The characters are manipulated through scenes which develop from plausible fact to fantasy like a tale from Hoffmann. Incidents from the remote past surface in the present; myth takes its place as a familiar component of life. This author wants to tell us that there is always a bridge between the visible and the invisible. The admirable thing about Hesse is that he elaborates the obvious with such affecting sincerity. For him originality means simply going back to the origins. He does not surprise, but he satisfies.

When he describes dreams in one of these stories as "nocturnal games" he connects with a constant theme of his work, the dream or fantasy as a gambit, a new throw, which shakes up and rearranges what is already there. His books are games about life. Every *Marchen* owes its existence to the belief that at each moment there is a fresh arrangement of pieces, always in the process of transformation, and that

the image is not entirely fanciful. In an interview published in last winter's *Paris Review*, for example, he says that the non-fiction account of contemporary Cuba that he is currently writing will prove to his critics "with historical facts that the real world in the Caribbean is just as fantastic as the stories in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*". What he is really writing, he says, is good old-fashioned "socialist realism".

*Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is very close to Márquez's ideal fiction. Written in the manner of investigative journalism and in a conspicuously flattened, unadorned prose, the novel sets out to reconstruct a murder that occurred twenty-seven years before. The crime originates with the Vicario family: a provincial household in which the brothers are all brought up to be men and the sisters to be wives. "Any man will be happy with them," the mother boasts, "because they have been made to suffer." The youngest daughter, Angela Vicario, does in fact marry the wealthy general's son who arrived six months before with silver saddlebags that matched the buckle of his belt and the rings on his boots, but on their wedding-night she reveals that she is not a virgin. What was meant to be an occasion for celebration turns out to be a public humiliation. And it is then that Angela tells her twin brothers the name of her supposed seducer: Santiago Nasar.

each moment and each piece contains the possibility of every other. The many transformations of this book's title story (bird becomes flower becomes butterfly becomes gemstone) signify the effortless intimacy with all life, embracing all connections, which the author hopes for himself. As his first metamorphosis Pictor becomes a tree, which must be the most common poetic symbol for receptivity.

The outsider is a persistent figure in these tales. The hero of the story "Hannes" is reputedly stupid because he will take no part in the activities of his fellows. Eventually they come to regard him, because of his deep familiarity with nature, as an intermediary between men and the gods, another divine food with insight into the other world. "The Merman" is an episode set in fifteenth-century Italy, is about a strange sea-creature attacked by men because of its singularity. It is later regarded as an emissary of the god Poseidon; it has a human torso, a fish-tail, and it speaks an obscure dialect of Greek. In "The

From the outset of Márquez's chronicle, everybody - including the reader - knows that the Vicario brothers intend to kill Santiago Nasar. Everybody knows how they mean to do it - with a pair of butcher's knives - and why. And they know so much because the brothers are dedicated to telling their plans to everyone they meet. The original Spanish title, lost in English translation, is important here. In *Una crónica de una muerte anunciada*, *anunciada* signifies not so much "foretold" as "announced" or "advertised" or "broadcast" - none of which, admittedly, makes for a very poetic title. The idea of an announced or broadcast death, however, is crucial. The brothers are committed to a course of action that has been determined for them - honour can only be redeemed publicly by their killing of Santiago - and they can only be relieved of their duty by the people around them. Once they have broadcast their intentions to the whole community, everyone, to some extent, by failing to stop them, participates in the crime.

When the murder has been committed, with most of the town gathered around the square to watch what is assumed to be inevitable, things - as is expected in a work by Márquez - start going curiously wrong: a muted collective guilt is obliquely expressed in a variety of ways. The brothers, for instance, start manifesting strange

Man of the Forests" the outsider kills a priest who has kept his flock in traditional ignorance. This rebel then pushes out through the known physical frontiers of his tribal world, as he has forced his way through imposed boundaries of knowledge. He is outside the law, but the suggestion here, as in Kafka, is that true law exists only outside the confines of the possible, defined in this story as the permissible. The "outsider" or "outlaw" seems in the end to know more about the springs of life than the lawful can learn from their books.

The story "Bird" (incidentally, a nickname for Hesse himself) is about a bird which is rare and valued but ultimately driven off: "one day the extraordinary beings are hunted and shot dead, prices are put on their heads or their hides, and not long afterwards their existence turns into a legend, which with the wings of a bird flies ever further away." In ancient belief birds often figure as messengers of the gods. It is appropriate that Hesse's most powerful image of the troublesome

symptoms of unease. Pedro believes that the exotic swelling in his groin is causing so much pain that it will keep him from ever sleeping again, and Pablo is unable to stop urinating. A woman suddenly succumbs to hallucinations and runs naked through the street, and several people die. Maria Alejandrina Cervantes, the town prostitute about whom it is said that she will only sleep once and that will be at her death, cannot keep herself from eating, and is discovered sunk in the middle of a Babylonian platter of veal cutlets, boiled chicken, and a small collection of pork chops. And Yolanda Nius, in whose erstwhile house Angela Vicario reveals her secret to her humiliated husband, returns in the shape of a phosphorescent bird, reclaiming, dismantling, and then carrying away her possessions. It is obvious that, once again, Márquez's mad Caribbean magic is at work.

It is also obvious that this murder, for all the simplicity with which it is narrated, is no simple crime. Part of its significance is evident in the way it is understood by those of Santiago Nasar's generation, for whom the murder seems to mark the end of their youth and render illusory so much that was once meaningful. From Miguel, Santiago Nasar's fiancée, for example, runs away immediately after the crime with a lieutenant from the border patrol who then prostitutes her among

outside should come in another story about a bird, the last story in this book. "The Jackdaw" is a perfect example of how the writer can transform fact into legend. The tale starts normally enough. Hesse walks in the everyday world of his favourite resort, Baden. He observes a tame jackdaw hopping on a bridge. This bird, familiar with humanity, exhibits an abnormal degree of individuality and so becomes an outsider. Hesse's speculation that the jackdaw may have been separated from his fellows because he was a mischief-maker, "which in no way rules out his being a genius." Perhaps he was such a nuisance to his family and society that he was "solemnly excommunicated and, like the scapegoat, driven out into the wilderness." From the familiar bridge at Baden Hesse projects his story into the mystery of the sacrificed king, connects with magic and religion, and links with the first fantasy in this book, written fifty years earlier, where he says he wants "to go back to where all things begin". He does all this by means of the less plausible explanation.

the rubber workers in a nearby town. Divina Flor - the servant meant for Santiago's future bed - is now fat, faded, and surrounded by the children of other loves. And, finally, after more than twenty years, Angela Vicario is reunited with the husband whose affronted masculine pride was the cause of the crime. Overweight, perspiring and bald, she arrives still carrying the same silver saddlebags that now serve merely as pathetic reminders of his ostentatious youth. Márquez's chronicle moves backwards and forwards in time, and views the participants in a senseless murder long after the passion that contributed to it has died. In many ways, then, the novel offers itself as an icy demythologizing of both romantic love and the romantic fully it inspires; it is a debunking of dream and sentiment hinted at by the book's epigraph: "the hunt for love is haughty falconry".

But the real significance of the murder is much greater, and is felt by the entire community whose uncritical faith in its own codes of justice and spectacle is responsible for the crime. The weight of this responsibility is felt most, though, by the unnamed narrator: he returns because he is bothered not by an unsolved mystery but by an unabsolved guilt, and the chronicle he produces is a document charting the psychology of mass complicity. It is interesting that Márquez, in developing a simple tale fraught with obvious political implications, chose not to fictionalize an actual political event. Latin America provides more than enough material - but to treat instead a fictional episode with the methods of a journalist. In so doing he has written an unusual and original work: a simple narrative so charged with irony that it has the authority of political fable. If not an example of the socialist realism Márquez may claim it to be elsewhere, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is in any case a mesmerizing work that clearly establishes Márquez as one of the most accomplished, and the most "magical", of political novelists writing today.

Writers at Work: *The Paris Review Interviews, Third Series*, edited by George Plimpton with an introduction by Alfred Kazin, has recently been reissued by Penguin Books (368pp., £2.95). It is 14 00 4542 7. Published in 1977, the book contains interviews with, among others, Jean Louis-Ferdinand Céline, William Burroughs, Saul Bellow and Norman Mailer. Series One to Three are now all in print in paperback and the Fourth Series, including interviews with Vladimir Nabokov and John Updike, will be reissued on September 30.

## Life in a bottle-full of dust

David Montrose

BETTE PESETSKY  
Stories up to a Point  
144pp. Bodley Head. £5.95.  
0 370 30483 7

Bette Pesetsky assembles short declarative sentences into very short stories, the kind that are now usually called fictions; their traditional "story" elements having been minimized. A new British fictioneer of this type would probably owe much to Gabriel Jopelovici and Gilles Gordon; Pesetsky, a new American - and an alumna of the Iowa Writers' Workshop - reflects the influence of Donald Barthelme, revered in creative writing classes for his apparent imitability. All fifteen stories in this first collection "incorporate" Barthelme's early "see-Jane-run" manner and his "fragmentary" method of construction. Typically, Pesetsky's narrator (always a woman) presents a mosaic of autobiographical episodes linked thematically or by association (the title story, an exception, comprises six *réclés* in no particular order). If the resulting arrangement appears to skip inconsequentially between two points, this is because it is designed only in Barthelme's words, to "supply a kind of sense of what is going on".

A number of stories are catalogues of misfortune that lack distinctiveness almost to the point of being interchangeable. The standard heroines are paired with broken relationships. Barthelme has a string of divorcees (the narrator of *Search* holds the record with five); her

Pesetsky has borrowed Barthelme's method, but not his madness, eschewing the surreal for a firm attachment to the quotidian: one does not encounter here a glass mountain in Manhattan, or sorceries on a wife-buying expedition. Her world, though, is the familiar made strange: second-hand echoes of Kafka - as disjunct, that is, through Barthelme - permeate these stories. Their heroines are anonymous inhabitants of anonymous places; when familiar locations are named, they have no more substantiality than that of words on the page; other people exist only as one-dimensional shadows. Neurotic, lonely, sad, Pesetsky's women endure lives of quiet desperation yet occupy anxious, jerky prose. But the one we now apart; there is the one we inhabit, with the same phone-in-shows, pasted, spastic children. The point, presumably, is that life is the angle of vision of the beholder: every individual creates a subjective reality. For Pesetsky's casualties, it will be as it appears in her stories; a bleak, directionless trial.

In *The Hobbyist*, the narrator becomes obsessed with reconstructing her grandmother's life through his film collection, hundreds of bottles filled over the decades. Forgotten incidents

are recalled, secrets uncovered: "In the late Thirties, he must have taken a mistress. *Dust from dress of R. Dust by bed of R. Dust near door of R's room*, 1938." "Dyslexia" is the story nearest to Barthelme's unique comedy. Elsewhere, Pesetsky's attempts at fashionably grim humour achieve only grimness, relieved by odd amusing passages. Throughout, one suspects that Pesetsky has chosen the wrong master, and this feeling hardens into conviction whenever she utilizes family history. As far as one can divine from recurrent motifs, Pesetsky's ancestors were Polish Jews; her grandparents brought the family to America. Unsurprisingly, quiet resonances of Isaac Bashevis Singer can be detected wherever she draws on this background. Then one realizes how much better a more traditional master, such as Barthelme, would have served her. The vicissitudes of Pesetsky's wounded are strikingly similar to those endured by "American" stories, but there is a wide gap between their portrayals. Barthelme's kind of minimalism is simply too detached and impressionistic to suggest a full spectrum of human predicaments; in his own work, of course, it is not meant to. Pesetsky may write as she does precisely in order to avoid comparisons with Singer, or perhaps in order to be modal. Whatever the reason, she will have to pay the price of her incoherence between form and content.

children disappoint and hurt her; she loses touch with friends and relatives. The most successful stories are those farthest removed from the formula - and these are also the most "story"-like. The heroine of "Dyslexia" departs from the norm by having too many, rather than too few, personal involvements. Husband, lover, son, daughter, mother - all oblige her to read books they have loved. In addition, she has to read for two college extension courses. As the story progresses, the burden increases: more and more books, less and less time. Eyesight deteriorates, sentences shorten into hurried notes. Rotten recommends *Marble Faun*. Letter from Barbara now back in school. Also copy of *Memoirs of a Madge*. Devoured in search of the apropos. Tension lamp sizzles. Vacuum repaired. Cleaning woman made salad. Receive from Smelfen ditto, receive from Ramon Song of Remembrance of Things Past. Receive from Chester illustrated copy of *The Red Badge of Courage*, receive from Mother *The Sea Wolf*. Open any book. Kolod bala-jaw primah. Release johid hom-jah.

In *The Hobbyist*, the narrator becomes obsessed with reconstructing her grandmother's life through his film collection, hundreds of bottles filled over the decades. Forgotten incidents

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**Faith and Power**



# Reading-matter for Romans

J. P. Sullivan

E. J. KENNEY and W. V. CLAUSEN (Editors)  
The Cambridge History of Classical Literature: Volume II, Latin Literature  
974pp. Cambridge University Press.  
£40.  
0 521 21043 7

Almost a quarter of a century ago I approached the two distinguished editors of this volume with a request that each of them write a critical essay on the Latin author he knew intimately by dint of editing the text. (The poets in question were Ovid and Persius.) They both courteously indicated that this was not the sort of writing in which they indulged and implied that the proposed collection of critical essays on Latin authors might be a somewhat disreputable enterprise — *ne suor tula crepidam*. The editors, however, without necessarily jumping on to a bandwagon, have now had a change of heart, since, in making the results of recent Latin scholarship and evaluation available to the student and the Common Reader, they stress, like learned fags, that the book's "emphasis is critical". Other than that, the framework adopted is traditional: chapters on authors or genres follow in a more or less chronological sequence, with two *exordia*, one cautious and competent on ancient book publishing by E. J. Kenney, and one on ancient literary criticism by Michael Winterbottom, which puzzlingly ignores the *obiter dicta* of practising poets, such as Catullus and Martial, and generally limits itself to the conventional verse or prose treatises on the subject such as those by Cicero, Horace and Quintilian: all Welles and no Pound, as it were.

There can be no doubt that such a standard history in English of Latin literature was badly needed, particularly if it incorporated the fruits of recent critical studies. For Greek the *chalcantene-Lesky*, in translation, has proved adequate in recent years, whereas Wight Duff, *Horace in Latin literature*, has not. It is a pity that this volume, which is a long time in the making, is not more than a collection of essays, but that it is a critical vision would be preferable to an evaluative report by a committee, but then, apart from Lesky, who would have the Johnsonian audacity to survey and evaluate such large tracts of literature as those of classical Greece and Rome? Unfortunately this volume is landably long on information and bibliography, but unjustifiably short on criticism. Expect no Johnsons, Emmons, or Leavitts here, given the limitations of space. I shall address myself merely to the discussions of the most familiar and the more controversial classics.

First, however, I should offer some general caveats which may help with your editions. Since some of the contributors are, by moderate standards, careful and even cavalier, about the clear dating of their authors and works, the editors might well furnish a rough chronological table as an appendix for easy reference. The four somewhat self-indulgent plates to illustrate the context of the ancient book (Kenney) should be either dropped or supplemented by other illustrations relevant to the history of Latin literature. Some carefully designed maps would be more useful and less expensive. Consistency is lacking all over the place; some chapters are lavishly annotated, some scarcely at all, and this is not, in my opinion, because of the relative obscurity or difficulty of the various writers, but rather, it would seem, because the editors have not seen fit to exercise the same rigour on literary criticism that they would apply to the reduction of texts. If guide-lines were laid down for all the contributors, they are invisible to me. The metrical appendix is inadequate, and simplicity here is no excuse, given the complexity of some of the discussions. The student who comes upon references to Ionic tetrameters, sapphics and galambics is surely entitled to be able to look them up on the spot, without rushing to the Raven or a similar handbook. Again, Martin Drury's appendix of authors

and works, adequate enough for reference perhaps, is still capricious and inconsistent. For some authors such as Lucretius, Horace, Virgil, Ovid, Persius and the younger Seneca, the reader is directed to English translations; for other significant authors, Tibullus, Propertius, Petronius and Juvenal, where perfectly adequate translations exist, he is left in the dark.

Obviously many of the chapters must concern themselves with technical writers or simply provide records of what we are missing from the corpus of Latin literature. But let us take some of the more important writers, particularly the poets, and see how they fare at the hands of the contributors: almost a score were recruited, although the burden fell heavier on some rather than others.

W. V. Clausen gives us sensible *explications de texte* of a selection of Catullus' poems with a plausible explanation of how our present collection may have been compiled from three *libelli*, but certainly not, as many have thought, by the poet himself. (The possibility of an editor extracting from the first *libellus* any elegiac poems to keep his metrical scheme consistent is not canvassed.) The trouble with this section is the dry-as-dust concentration on poetic and verbal technique. That poetry also says something, whether about love or hatred, friendship or folly, time and eternity, no student would ever guess from this chapter. In contradistinction, Alexander Dalzell on Lucretius boldly tears into the philosophy, the structure and the matter of Lucretius, with minimal, but sensible, comment on language and technique, and shows his awareness of later literary approaches in describing Lucretius as "the most Freudian of Latin poets".

So, after Catullus, we turn expectantly to the bleeding hearts of the elegists. How do they affect the academic critic? Georg Luck sketches the background we need to understand the extant Roman elegists, Lygdamus, Tibullus, Propertius and Ovid, but his description of their work seems overly compressed, even brusque, and he takes no account of differing critical views and interpretations of these complex poetic sensibilities. Nor does he follow Clausen's example and deal with such vexed problems as the text of Book 2. The section will be useful for Professors' Bequest, but it smacks of the advertisement to the *apertus* of Vincenzo di Padula or Ezra Pound's *Homage to Sextus Propertius*.

In general, the treatments of Ovid's work by Luck and Kenney are thorough enough factually, although they take only a timorous note of the emulation and the off-times dogged rivalry among the poets of the Augustan age. To state, as Kenney does, that "Ovid was far too genuinely respectful of Virgil" to compete with *Metamorphoses* may be construed not just as a *pis aller*, but an implicit Calimachian critique of the whole notion of writing epic, just as Ovid's *Amores* and *Art Amatoria* may be seen as a "send-up" of the serious love-poets, Gallus, Tibullus and Propertius. It is for this reason that Ovid's work, *Ovid as Epic Poet*, followed by Kenney, is so beside the point. Kenney is right to allude to Calimachus' *Aelia*, and therefore to the Roman poet's homage to his predecessor. The basic difference is that Ovid, perhaps superior to any other Roman poet, is congratulating himself here on his Calimachian art, as against Calimachus' vaunted art, has been able to produce a *carmen perpetuum*, epic (pace Kenney) since it can be used also for uninterrupted praise, i.e. the *Aelia* an episodic epic? Unlike the term *novel*, "epic" should not just be bandied about in the interests of a dubious thesis.

When we come to the early Principate, we find trotted out, as usual, the clichés of a "truly classical or golden age of Roman literature" applied to Augustan literature. (Do we have similar terms to compete Donne, Pope and Terrence, with Walt Whitman, Ezra Pound and Robert Lowell?) Such sentences as "With hopes of the

emergence of a peaceful and stable society after long years of civil turmoil arose also a miraculous flowering of literature" (W. T. C. Vessey) are practically meaningless. Does this mean because of the hopes or because of the stable society? (But in that case think of Switzerland!) Are patronage and affluence, even pandering to an audience, as is the case with modern best-sellers, not to be taken into account? One of the troubles with this history is that it is pouring new scholarly wine into old critical bottles without taking the trouble to question the fragility of the glass. In the Augustan period, for many Romans Ennius and Lucius rather than Virgil and Horace would have represented the Golden Age of Latin literature.

This points up one serious defect in the whole enterprise, the almost complete neglect of the seminal influence of Roman writers on later literature and criticism and the different views taken of them in succeeding centuries. P. G. Walsh tries valiantly to make up for this in an all too brief epilogue, but one would get the impression even from this that Latin literature ceased to have any influence or even be read after the Middle Ages.

If we turn to the handling of genres as a test, we find that the discussion of satire is more fragmented, though fuller, than that of elegy. A. S. Gratwick's discussion of Ennius and Lucilius is informative, but, naturally enough, is less judgmental than the sections on Persius and Juvenal by Niall Rudd and J. C. Bramble, where Rudd makes out a weak case for the young Stoic poet, and Bramble directs a somewhat plying gaze at Juvenal, while putting him on a morally higher plane than Martial, who "is succinct with never a moral reflection; he is always uninvolved". This is clearly wrong, even if one disagrees with the dilute Roman epicureanism of the *carpe diem* kind. But then Martial has already been dismissed by Kenney with the verdict: "his work was slight, modest and occasional"; inconsistently, Kenney later praises him as "a major artist" in elegiacs. Is this, however, the Martial so admired by the Elizabethans, Jacobean and Restoration writers, particularly by the tribe of Ben? Martial's obscenity is thankfully no longer an issue, but, as usual, the age-old charge of flattery stands and the quest for patronage seems to have affected the critical perception of these academic critics in their university notes, who seek only foundations, grants and not private motives. To gain perspective on this element of Ben Jonson's puffery of James (or to the fulsome eulogies directed by Dryden and other poets of the period at sundry noble lords.

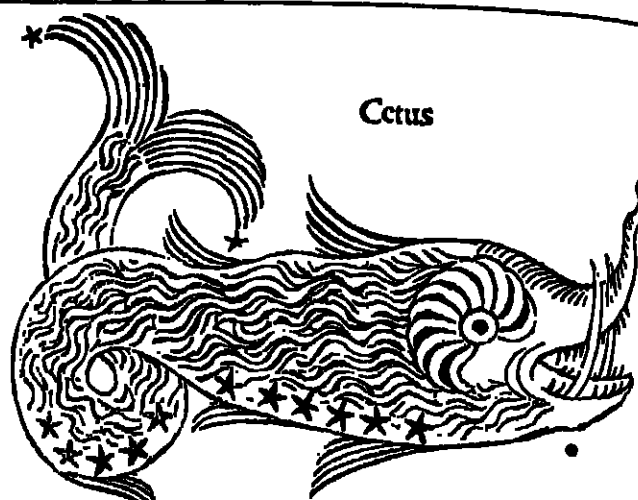
The reader will encounter an almost complete oblivion in most of the sections of anything written under the classical influence after, say, William of Malmesbury: Welsh on Apuleius and C. J. Herington on Seneca are honourable exceptions and Robert Browning adds a few pointers in the direction of Christian and Byzantine literature.

In such a magisterial and up-to-date work, where the reader might ask, the New Bearings in Latin literature? To go by the number of pages allotted to the major authors could, possibly be misleading: but Virgil is given three cities-five pages and no less than R. D. Williams, L. P. Wilkinson, love elegists take him on; on the other hand, a dozen lines are given to Horace's fifteen; Lucan is given twenty-five as against Propertius' four; Quintilian's two and the twenty-seven allotted to "Martial" and Juvenal together. Much, of course, can be said in a little space, and length is an indication of either sense or sensibility.

In the light of Walsh's statement that "The primary aim of any literary history is to foster a deeper appreciation of the creative writing it describes", a glance at the way the more individual judgments and reorientations will be in order. Ennius' *Annales* is the most respectable of all Latin literature (Gratwick); Lucretius' complexity and poetic merits are appropriately praised by Dalzell, his work being "one of the rarest of literary accomplishments, a rarest of didactic poems on a scientific subject. Few great poets have attempted such a work...". Cato, Cicero's verse and Caesar are all given more than usual high marks; their moral and propagandistic elements are glossed over. Virgil retains his customary pre-eminence: "The publication of the Book of *Eclogues* is an epoch in Latin poetry" (Clausen); the *Georgics*, Wilkinson states: "its merits are as multifarious as its subject-matter". A sensitive discussion of Virgil's two voices in the *Aeneid* by Williams concludes that "it is because of his many-sidedness that in every generation since his own Virgil has been the most widely read of the Roman poets". The now familiar concept of the two voices, the public and the private, is used also by Rudd in his critical dissection of Horace's "richness and diversity", although the chapter consists mainly of a fast run-through of Horace's whole opus, before offering such conclusions as "the *Odes* were a new phenomenon in ancient literature". Rudd leaves us with the impression that Horace inherits his usual critical portion of the Professors' Bequest.

The elegists, as was mentioned earlier, are given short shrift, except for Ovid whose elegiacs are subjected to the scrutiny not only of Luck, but also of one of the editors, Kenney. The thirty-seven or so pages granted him are not necessarily undeserved, and, although Luck refrains from serious critical judgments, Kenney makes a valiant, and mainly successful, attempt to defend the neglected *Tristia*, and, to a lesser degree, the *Epistulae ex Ponto*, *Heroides*. The curious point made in this discussion is that in some ways "Ovid is 'un-Augustan'". From this it seems clear that at least one of the editors has a shaky grasp on the critical and historical terms that provide the basic framework of the history. Is Tibullus "un-Augustan" because he never mentions the Emperor? Or Propertius with his attacks on the imperial legislation of the morality? It is difficult to see how useful such terms are in evaluating writers who belonged chronologically to the period under discussion.

Naturally, it is when we come to the so-called Silver, or post-Augustan, age of literature that we begin to see some disputes have always flourished. Vessey's preface, entitled, somewhat modestly, "Challenge and response" throws around the usual commonplaces: "Augustus' restored Republic... gave birth to a truly classical or 'golden age of Roman letters'; Ovid is 'harbinger of the silver age'". Nevertheless, he judiciously distinguishes between the classical or 'golden age' of Roman letters, and the 'silver age' of the Silver Age, but he does perhaps protest too much when he argues that in the Silver Age "Status does not present himself as a claim...". Friendship, deferential claims, still, to judge by the tone and indeed fulsome *versus occasionis*, is obvious that Status was locked into the same system of patronage as thereafter. Historical perspective is the best defence, but this is never tackled, the book volume is regarded to the purely literary past, or, at best, with all due attention paid to its Greek roots and little, except atomistically, to the



The Poeticon Astronomicum of C. J. Hyginus (Venice, Radoloh, 1482) contains the earliest known representations of the constellations in woodcuts. A copy of the second edition (1485) is advertised for sale in Bernard Quaritch's latest catalogue, from which the illustration above is reproduced.

merits are appropriately praised by Dalzell, his work being "one of the rarest of literary accomplishments, a rarest of didactic poems on a scientific subject. Few great poets have attempted such a work...". Cato, Cicero's verse and Caesar are all given more than usual high marks; their moral and propagandistic elements are glossed over. Virgil retains his customary pre-eminence: "The publication of the Book of *Eclogues* is an epoch in Latin poetry" (Clausen); the *Georgics*, Wilkinson states: "its merits are as multifarious as its subject-matter". A sensitive discussion of Virgil's two voices in the *Aeneid* by Williams concludes that "it is because of his many-sidedness that in every generation since his own Virgil has been the most widely read of the Roman poets". The now familiar concept of the two voices, the public and the private, is used also by Rudd in his critical dissection of Horace's "richness and diversity", although the chapter consists mainly of a fast run-through of Horace's whole opus, before offering such conclusions as "the *Odes* were a new phenomenon in ancient literature". Rudd leaves us with the impression that Horace inherits his usual critical portion of the Professors' Bequest.

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0 907675 01 8

The trouble about capitalism, George Gilder points out early in his book, is that even its best friends tend to be apologetic about it. Most people may regard capitalism as the necessary engine of economic growth. Many may even see it as the best system yet devised for promoting individual liberty. But few are actually prepared to embrace the values of capitalism. While we may celebrate the workings of the Invisible Hand, we tend to be somewhat less enthusiastic about the visible hands that turn the wheels: the entrepreneurial capitalists themselves. While we may welcome the wealth generated by capitalism, we want to use it to establish a social order different from that created by capitalism: to spend the money so as to remedy some of the inequalities and injustices created by the Invisible Hand. From this perspective, the real virtue of capitalism is that it is the only system yet devised which creates the possibilities of putting right the wrongs which it inflicts.

Mr Gilder, however, will have none of this. Not for him the doubts of a "masochistic intelligentsia", ever agonizing about the "moral contradictions" of capitalism. Not for him a justification for capitalism based on mere expediency: that its evils are probably less than those of any other system yet invented. His book, which comes to us as a "major international bestseller", is designed as a celebration of capitalism. In it Gilder proves himself to be the Billy Graham of economics. A simple point is hammered home, again and again. The prose glitters with Madison Avenue lyricism. Homely examples point up the argument. It is difficult to avoid admiring the sophistication of the technique, even while realising the simplicity of the message.

There is no need to be apologetic about capitalism, Gilder insists. Capitalism is not about exploitation. It is about giving: "Not from greed, avarice, or even 'self-love' can one expect the rewards of commerce, but from a spirit closely akin to altruism, a regard for the needs of others, a benevolent, outgoing, and courageous temper of mind." Moreover, capitalism is essentially about creativity: "Capitalists are motivated

not chiefly by the desire to consume wealth or indulge their appetites, but by the freedom and power to consummate their entrepreneurial ideas... They are men with an urge to understand and to act, to master something and transform it, to figure out a part of nature and society and turn it to the common good."

So capitalism, far from being a necessary evil that must be tolerated but cannot be embraced, is a moral order in its own right. But embracing it requires faith. Capitalism rests on an acceptance of chance: "a plunge into darkness — a dependence on incalculable providence". To overcome the ever-present temptation to fall back on planning and regulating the economy — a doomed attempt to escape from inevitable uncertainty — "it is necessary to have faith, to recover the belief in chance and providence, in the ingenuity of free and God-fearing men." Furthermore, "this belief will allow us to see the best way of helping the poor, the way to understand the truths of equality before God that can only come from freedom and diversity on earth... Our greatest and only resource is the miracle of human creativity in a relation of openness to the divine."

I have deliberately quoted Gilder at some length, rather than simply summarising his argument, because this is the only way of conveying the full, stomach-churning quality of his prose. If capitalism in its early days found reassurance in the tough, knobby prose of the Protestant divines, in its decline it is celebrated in the soft language of empty religiosity. As court chaplain to the self-made millionaires, Gilder is telling his congregation that in serving Mammon they are also serving God.

But behind the court chaplain, there is also the court economist. Gilder prescribes policy as well as preaching faith. Cut the welfare benefits that blunt the incentive to work and so condemn the poor to perpetual poverty by undermining the traditional values of self-help; he argues; cut, too, the taxes that inhibit the creativity and drive of the entrepreneur and so take the brake off the engine of growth. Only by encouraging wealth, not by subsidizing poverty, will we create a better society.

This line of argument is familiar enough, although Gilder develops his case with some shrewdness and lack of respect for conventional wisdom. He is more persuasive as an analyst than as an apologist. The objections to this kind of pop supply economics are also

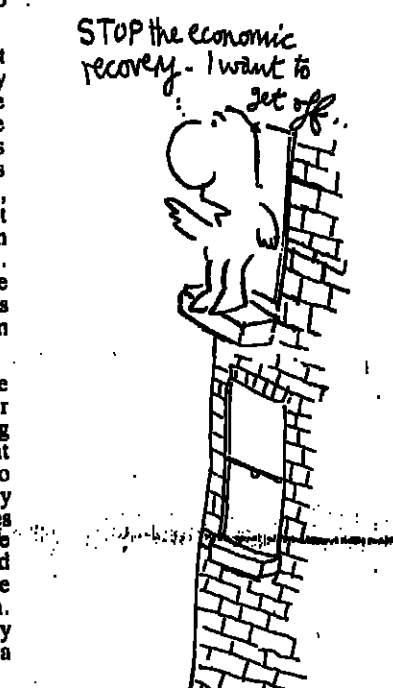
familiar. It is certainly far from self-evident that the economic troubles of the United States and Britain, the two countries considered by Gilder, can be attributed to their exceptionally high levels of public expenditure and taxation. Their levels of public spending are considerably lower than those of some of their successful economic competitors, and their effective tax-rates (when the accountants have got to work) are much lower than the nominal rates quoted by Gilder.

What is much more interesting about Gilder's book — in as much as it clearly reflects the views of a large and influential section of the population in both Britain and the United States, including possibly Mrs Thatcher and President Reagan — is its curiously romantic vision of capitalism. Its justification of capitalism is an attempt to evoke the ghosts of the past and springs largely from a repudiation of what capitalism has become: the "Pension Fund" capitalism, in Peter Drucker's phrase, where market power has become concentrated in large institutions — where nearly 35 per cent of all shares in the United States

are held by pension funds, and almost 70 per cent of all shares in Britain by pension funds, insurance companies and unit or investment trusts. If risk capital is difficult to procure, if the individual entrepreneur faces problems in getting off the ground, the explanation may lie as much in the non-entrepreneurial, risk-avoiding institutions of capitalism as in the regulatory or tax policies of the governments. To exaggerate only slightly, implementing the vision of entrepreneurial capitalism may require a transformation in the institutions of capitalism. Big business, rather than big government, may be the real enemy faced by Gilder and those who share his views.

Gilder's vision may therefore be more disturbingly radical than he lets on. Ironically, his critique echoes that of the Marxists, who argue that advanced Western societies face an insoluble crisis, in that the political pressures to develop the Welfare State are inevitably at odds with the economic imperative to accumulate capital. His solution, of course, is simply to ignore the political side of the equation. It is not a solution which is likely to commend itself to politicians, and it is no accident that Gilder's book is highly critical of the actual policies being pursued by both the Thatcher and the Reagan administrations. If Gilder's book is designed to give reassurance to his congregation, it is also calculated to bring them eventual disillusion. For they are destined to be betrayed by the political leaders who may share some of the rhetoric but who, inevitably, will be driven to abandon or water down the policies required to realize the vision.

No doubt these are the kinds of criticism that Gilder would expect from a member of the "masochistic intelligentsia". So let me, in conclusion, concede to him a central point in his argument: his contention that if we want the benefits of capitalism, we have got to learn to love, cherish and encourage the entrepreneurial capitalist. To agree on that point is easy, particularly for an academic reviewer — since the universities are probably the last home of nineteenth-century capitalism in its pure form, with small professorial firms trying to maximize their research income in a ferment of entrepreneurial activity. If capitalism is about creativity, we are in the same line of business. Far more difficult is to devise policies which will ensure that the benefits of capitalism are not destroyed by the activities required to generate them, and that is an issue which this book unfortunately side-steps.



A climactic moment from Help! and other ruminations, Mel Calman's latest collection of cartoons reprinted from The Times and Sunday Times (128pp. Methuen. £2.50. 0 413 50690 8).

The lack of such funds is reflected in Moore's own assessment of the oil industry's effect on a single Scottish community, i.e. the Aberdeenshire coastal town of Peterhead. His work on Peterhead, he observes in his introduction, "was intended to be part of a much larger programme of research". That programme never materialized, and its failure to do so accounts, no doubt, for Moore's somewhat tentative approach to his subject.

This is no work of sociological theory. Towards the end of his book, Moore dips cautiously into the mass of recent sociological writing devoted to development, underdevelopment and industrialization. Much of that work, deriving as it does from the experience of the Third World, he finds unhelpful in illuminating the case of Peterhead.

Peterhead was subordinated to powerful economic and political interests, he concedes. But though its state of affairs, the southern academic establishment, he has alleged in print, has demonstrated no real interest in what has been going on in the far-flung corners of the kingdom. And, being uninterested in the same establishment — or so Professor Moore avers — has taken care to ensure that the substantial case made available for major analyses of the social changes set in train by the offshore oil business.

The story is told of an Eskimo child who defined the typical Eskimo family as a man, a woman, two children and an anthropologist. And there have been times in the last few years when the people of northern Scotland have shared that feeling of being overwhelmed by questionable laden academics engaged, in the Scottish case, in investigating the North Sea oil industry's impact on the communities most affected by it. But there has been little to show for all this effort. Prestigious professors have flown in, flown out and written next to nothing. Postgraduate students have completed ponderous theses which have been left to languish in the libraries of obscure universities. There exists no worthwhile body of serious literature on the social consequences of the single most important factor in the recent history of the northern half of Scotland.

Robert Moore, Professor of Sociology at Aberdeen University, has been a persistent critic of this state of affairs. The southern

Westminster hellbent on getting as much oil ashore as quickly as possible, it was clearly less vulnerable to external exploitation than would have been the case of a town located in an underdeveloped country in Africa or Asia. But Peterhead and is, underdeveloped in comparison with much of southern Britain. That poses problems which Moore acknowledges but fails to tackle convincingly. Our understanding of the nature of the relationship between an advanced industrial economy and that of a peripheral region is not advanced greatly by this book. "Theoretically," Moore confesses engagingly, "we find ourselves at something of a loss."

In one respect, that may be no bad thing. It means that theorizing gives way to fact-gathering, and the facts are illuminating enough. A major theme of his book is the extent to which the oil boom of the early 1970s threatened to destroy all attempts to control it. That was particularly evident in the Peterhead land market, where speculation was rife. It was evident, too, in the inadequacy of the planning response as essentially rural local authorities found themselves struggling to cope with the arrival of multinational corporations accustomed to prevailing over sovereign governments. But while Peterhead suffered from its lack of any real say in national policy, the town was no simple and innocent community, exposed suddenly to the avaricious attentions of the oil companies.

Among the better features of this book is its analysis of Peterhead's social structure and its uncovering of the tensions and conflicts between fisherfolk and businessmen, working class and middle class. Here and there are glimpses of a reality quite at odds with the prevalent image of Peterhead as an idyllically united community of seafaring people. The Conservative Party secretary, explaining the apparently aberrant behaviour of a local headmaster, says simply: "What do you expect? He's only fisherfolk."

A good deal of discussion about the social consequences of the oil industry's presence in northern Scotland has proceeded on the assumption that all was lovely in this oilmen barged in and spoiled everything, in the manner of the snake intruding on the Garden of Eden. Moore demonstrates conclusively that things were not that simple. There remains one not so minor mystery. Why have we waited so long for a book dealing with this period. 1972-77? It appears when placed like Peterhead are grappling with an oil boom but with the slump which has followed the steep downturn in North Sea exploration. If sociologists wish to contribute constructively to policy-making, they will have to learn to write a lot faster.

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Eric Korn

I need to know more about the unfortunate N. Macleod, author of *Koren and the lost tribes of Israel with Korean, Japanese and Israeli illustrations dedicated to Great Britain, America, Germany, France and the other Teutonic nations of Europe, the supposed representatives of the Royal House of Judah, and the seed only of the Royal House of Ephraim and the Children of Israel their companions*... (there's a lot more to the title but that's the gist of it), published in Yokohama in 1879, along with a curiously illustrated guide book to Japan, obscure threats to his enemies, much self-pity, and advice to Japan on how to become a world power. (Adopt Christianity, fish freezing, scientific division of labour and the Macleod patent laundry.)

Authorities distinguish him from other N. Macleods, for example the three Norman Macleods, of whom one was tried for high treason and later knighted, while the others were a pair of Scottish divines, father and son, authors respectively of *God's Mercy Manifest in the Expulsion of our parents from the Garden of Eden and Cretes at the Kirk for the folk of Kintira*, two splendidly plonking titles, one of them more or less responsible for the Disruption. The third Norman (editor of *Good Words*, by the way) did venture far enough from Caledonia to write *Peeps at the Orient*, but he seems never to have recovered from the rigours of the trip, and died in 1872, too soon to have been our man, who is identified by the British Library catalogue as "writer of books on Japan", an admission of ignorance.

Macleod tells us a lot about himself, though intelligibility suffers from his and the oriental printers' unhandiness with punctuation, and his reluctance over to finish a sentence. Macleod was a Macleod of Skye, apparently, "poor Mac who refused £30,000 bribe to betray his prince, mna bimbo de gozarimasho, as it is too far north for the golden calf to travel, the navy is Britannia's wooden walls, but the Macs of Dunvegan".

Most of his later troubles are described in the preface, one spectacular sentence, a six-hundred-word gallop from indent to full stop. Since the writers arrived in Japan in 1867 during the last shoguns reign he has devoted a great part of his time and all his available means to travel and researches... often without a single dollar in his pocket, when the exchequer was full, when necessary he travelled in state, landlady Japanese asked him if he was travelling at government expense, as if one could not travel on one's own public without having the credit of paying for it... when the funds were lower he travelled by horse and kango, and when they were down to zero he strode shanks mare, the good steed King David rode when he slew the Philistines giant, twice he was deprived of the root of all evil, by fire and shipwreck the only times he was uninsured having allowed the policy to lapse... and when laid up in Osaka, a few hundred copies of his first work were stolen from his publisher in Nagasaki, who looted from Australia, and hawked in Japan by a foreigner at half price, and his booksellers wrote him that a heathen Chinese is doing the same thing with his last work in China, and to crown all he lately received the Job's comforting intelligence from his booksellers in Hongkong that they had come to grief after having made the best sales of his last three works... [307 words omitted]... this present edition... as good and ready a scribe as its predecessors.

N. Macleod is also notable for his verse: King Davids seed, translated root of Israel, whose words spread forth to Caledonia, rugged shore, rugged shore, Hor fruit a race of Kings and rulers bore, Whose seed will sit on many a throne, Relapsing from the tropic to the torrid Zone, Her prosperous sons are found in nearly every clime.

And will be to the end of time, And not till she her final course has run, Will Judah's Royal banner sink beneath a never setting sun.

Then there's a lot of stuff about P and O and the prophet Ezekiel, and

railway shares and mineral rights and the treasure of Solomon's temple found in Jin Mu Tenno's grave, and how to foster the fledgling Mitsu Bibi company and thereby grant both Japan and foreigners all that was required for their mutual benefit by which the sun would never set on the dominions of Dui Nipon, as well as cure her of a long standing foreign bowel complaint...

The rising sun rose: I don't know about the bowel complaint; but I hope Macleod made out all right.

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Something of a bench mark in eudystylography, or creative misprinting, was established recently by our daily contemporary *The Sun* name, but it used to be published in *The Sun* - a most curious piece, in the *Sun*'s unmistakable tone of amused tolerance (the tone of Mediterranean holiday postcards from friends who have a map of the Metro in their kitchen) and it concerned an Indian cinema megastar or gigastar who recently underwent emergency surgery for a ruptured intestine, escorted by the prayers of the multitudes who follow his films, (or "films" as they are called here, a curious reference, I suppose, to Nine Elms, the site of London's wholesale fruit and vegetable market).

After discussing his performance, charisma, illness and blessed recovery, the item concluded waggishly that, appropriately, he had ventured his intentions in a film fight, and it was a while before the camera crew realized he wasn't acting. The curious Gallic phrase ("MM the tourists are amiable invited to venture their intentions at our luxurious Casino") arrested me: I haven't space to reproduce the painstaking process of observation, hypothesis, inductive leap and confirmatory test by which I came to realize that "he ventured his intentions" was actually a misprint for "he ruptured his intestines". Then felt I like some watcher of the skies, or Chadwick as he gradually became clear that the poetic forms of Linear B concealed communications in familiar old bubble-and-squeak.

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Since the film-fans numbered not millions or billions but hundreds of millions it would be best to call him not mega- or giga- star, but core- star, that nandi Hindi multiplier for 10<sup>6</sup>, a square lakh or hind of lakhs (an Indian Don Juan would be called lakhuster). More often, unfortunately, careful proof-reading removes intentional jokes. (I once lost a rather nice line about a man in a novel who was going through the Change of Wife, which got corrected to Change of Life). And you can't make a reference to Michael Footle or Margaret Thatcher; the latter gets corrected to Margate. Thrasher, a species of shark. Nor can you hope to get across conceits about where Alf the Bishop of Drumbchester used to complain a funless sea.

Samuel Butler thought it would be droll to ask "But does not Tennyson say 'The better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all?'". And so, in the second edition of *The Way of All Flesh*, he does: "In the first, it was amended by 'some cultured printer's hand, who had too seriously taken to heart Lord Salisbury's recommendation to verify your references'". There's a whole class of frothy jokes with one layer less of irony than the material they are ironing, like those who speak of "the not-so-gentle art" of something-or-other. This phenomenon (pig-irony for want of a better name) is familiar from *Private Eye's* "Pseud's Corner" which suffers from a sort of axiomatic disability, the objection that the lesser wit cannot embrace the greater, nor the lens-hood photograph the camera.

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I'm not all that enthusiastic about our British legislators, but at least they don't try to poison us directly. Whereas here is a handbook of congressional

recipes, and not the first ("a second smorgasbord" it says; the official title is *What's Cooking in Congress*, written and published by a life-affirming couple called Marian and Harry Barba, who are jointly, I guess, "Harian Creative Press - Books (The Workshop Under the Sky)" of Saratoga Springs." Parentheses not mine.

Harian Creative Press - Books have also published 3 by Harry Barba (novellas), 3x3 by Barba and friends, *One of a Kind* by Barba, *The Day the World Went Sane* (described as "a novellette and a play") and *The Case for Socially-Functional Art, Education and Culture*. There are also the Harian Creative Awards, so getting fifty senators, sixty representatives, a deceased senator, a congressman's spouse and two presidential press officers to describe their favourite food is by way of relaxation.

But not without significance. "It is in the heat of this very real kitchen of life," says the editor's introduction, entitled by happy invention "Barbaucous", "that Americans become non-partisan in the fullest sense of the word." But not non-political. Whether incumbent or retired (Barba uses "ex officio") they are still in there, boosting regional produce and giving off an air of wholesome fragility. No delicately glazed roasts, no connoisseurs or salamis; most of the recipes call for beans and hamhocks, or produce apple or other pies for being as American as, or cookies and fudge to evince reassuring unsophistication. But healthy ethnic is all right: Senator Hayakawa offers Hayakawa's Sukiyaki Cacciatore, which sounds like a campaign song. Two Texans promote two varieties of Pecan Pie; Florida offers Key Lime Pie or Florida Shrimp Casserole (to say nothing of Claude Pepper's favourite Louisiana; Representative John Breaux of (which reminds me that A. J. Liebling spoke of a New Orleans politico named De Breaux pronounced W) has something exceedingly called Environmental Gumbo; Bella Abzug of New York overcomes her natural reticence to proffer Bella Abzug's Fabulous Cheese Cake and Bella Abzug's Glorious Sweet and Sour Chuck. Massachusetts men, including Edward Kennedy, apparently live on Cape Cod Chowder, while R. Taft Jr offers Ohio Lobster Bisque (featuring the famous Ohio Lobster, prize prize for the valiant trawlermen of Elizabeth). A sour note is struck by Pennsylvania Taylor, who specifies married to a Virginian Senator at the time; and an overly sweet note is struck by Cranston of California, who under the emollient name of "White Salad" seriously advances a recipe for a can of cherries in a pint of whipped cream with half a pound of almonds and half a pound of miniature marshmallows. Jimmy Carter's frozen cheese with peacans and strawberry preserve doesn't bear close examination either.

At the other, macho, extreme end Senator Jerrette of South Carolina's Horry County Chicken Bogg ("put a hogen hen in an iron pot" and Bob Stump's Arizona Barbecue ("dig a four foot by four foot by six foot and fill with meat; after twenty-four hours add a hundred pounds of chuck in wet of thing one would expect from, say, *Cuisine SDF*). Even Barba is a bit perturbed by the fragility of it all: "I had been led to believe most of our sumptuous fare and imbibe their share of the finest brut wines." (Does he mean Brut? Or Brewed? Or Fruit? Or Brut? In the sense of famous, but not think since.) To deliver things there are poetic biographies of Presidents ("mumble of word and wit, his verses are a tasty sauce and a bubbly wine for congressional repeat"). They are enjambed.

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Deep offence has been caused by volume III of the Supplement to the *OED* in the palm-fringed paradise of Andhra Pradesh, choicest stretch of India's coastal strand, where there is a heartfelt welcome for the weary traveller. "A heartfelt welcome for the weary traveller," say the tourist bureau signs, in English as well as the local Dravidian language with an attractive script that appears to be applied to the page with a cake-icing bag, has given us copra, teak, and possibly mulligatawny, and is clearly not to be sneezed at, a risky activity at the best of times. The Andhra Tourist Bureau ensures the English-language announcements by who check the text by rendering it back into the vernacular. Such a person is properly known as a remalaynamer, and may be said to know his job were until unfairly neglected by Oxford, one of the chief attractions: "Visit Cochin, home of the world's largest palindromes".

Now here is a recent booklist: *I. Naray: Trench Yourself: Indochina (EUP 1976)*, *A. Burgess: Earthly Powers (Penguin 1976)*, *R. G. Finucane: Approaches of the Dead,*

or the following memorably Thribblish (Thribblike, thribbesque, thribblian) lines on Millard Fillmore:

Signing the Fugitive Slave Act  
Axed the cancer of this uninspiring man.  
His spouse Abigail  
A former school teacher...  
The temptation is to quote a whole anthology of first ladies:

His chateleine Louise  
Only foreign born  
First lady, played both harp and spinet very well

but I must leave room for the lyrics (alas, I cannot reproduce the music) of James A. Martin's "America, My Jump". "TWEEN the gold-EN bay, light-ED East-ERN shore lies the LAND of E-VERY people EVER gleen-ing; ten score a six this re-cl-pe of dream-ing, the taste, sp-cy, soup in per-fect Mix.... There is more, but my appetite fails me.

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I have another work on political economy, too, of which I am specially proud. It is quite unreadable and I am sure unsaleable. I often take it down and look at it. I leave it about to tempt people, but it is as unreadable as a cuneiform inscription. The book is *On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, by David Ricardo, Esq., Second Edition, London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1819. It has a back and covers of green leather - is in excellent condition (never having been read) and it is really beautifully printed. I do like David Ricardo, Esq. No publisher dare write Michael Arlen Esq., or even Rudyard Kipling Esq., today. The book is on offer at one shilling.

*The Private Papers of a Bankrupt Bookseller*, Cape 1931 (reissue 1940).  
Lot 457, Ricardo D. On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation, second edition, Subunus, £528 (ie £480 + £48 premium).  
Society's, April 27, 1982.

The author of *The Private Papers* (and their sequel, *The Bankrupt Bookseller Speaks Again*) was one William Young Darling, later Sir William Young Darling, who wrote, under the various pseudonyms of "Timoleon", Peter Goggs, Charles Cavers and Penelope Potter, *Should the House of Lords be Abolished?*, *King's Cross to Waverley and India, the Ladies*. He was not noticeably a bookseller, and was about as far from bankruptcy as it is possible to get, being a Director, later Extraordinary Director, of the Royal Bank of Scotland. The thought strikes me that he may have known more about Ricardo than he let on.

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Cultural History of Ghana

(J. Joyce), Collected Epigrams

Byron, Lord, Child Harold's Pilgrimage (Virtue 1845 with engravings by

(1. Rodenterry, Star Trek: The Motion Picture)

Anon, Henriette's Headdress or the Family Life (p. 3.11)

If this sounds omnivorous, that it is part of the diet of a six-volume Borzai called *Borzai* (he was called Boris, but this is too Russian for us), a sound used to have unfortunate dogs, which may be caused by his confusion. His being on the left of the world in the standard bookcase, and having a *horror vacui*, tends to make books as itself as a lamp files (see files, as better files).

But since (as those of the house who oppose my plan to have him) there are thousands of books about his teeth will turn next. When he eaten only the Burgess and the deduced that his medical alphabet, and inductively his Cabala collection, and the six copies Cabot Lodge's *Memoirs* (as when he ate the anonymous *Heaven* wondered if he was giving me a clue to the authorship (Joyce Cary, *Cabot de Vica*, Dr Cabanes?) But his meal (marking and inwardly digested) was Steinbeck's *Cannery Row*, suitably puppyish book, you think, hoisterous, goodhearted, in bit soft) which only made me was working through some kind canine index which cross-referenced titles and authors, like the old about Mill on Liberty with Diction Index, which members of the Society Indexers (did you know there was Wheatley Medical for an Outcast Index?) assured me never happened dismissing it as a mere canard by Cunard, Fincham; ditto, mere, orange, M'Y or Old Wives Tale (M'Y Wives' Tale, The see Bennett, (Bard Arnold; see also Pease, G.; Habbard O.M., Dame).

It's perhaps relevant to mention that *Cannery Row* was the first *London* (1945), rubber-stamped "colored edition" on the rear free endpaper, with the ticket of *The People's Bookshop*, Johannesburg. This was a rare if trivial variant, which I have been hoping to sell for a non-trivial sum to a Monterey collector (completeist is bookman's euphemism for "monomaniac"). Of course, the absence of a dust-wrapper might have deterred him (I mean the publisher Californian, not the Borzai, who demonstrably indifferent to presence or absence of wrapper, having done his Baconian work, reading maketh a full dog, and Finucane, new and wrapped, and the Byron, jacketless from the through otherwise a particularly fine and fresh example of a may be freshness attracted him - a Victorian dec cloth).

Well, some books are to be read, and some few to be chewed and digested; but I was most but - and was he by the damage to *Heaven's* pretty little parody of the *secret memoir genre* with *Heaven's* illustrations in the style of *De Mille's* bibliographies. It has, I confess, "Hall and Farewell" by Hugh Walpole, and is presumably entirely by him, would thus be an exciting acquisition for a Walpole collector, if it were such a thing.

By the time the habit is occupied (we are trying powdered dogpaw on the spine and electroshock on the paws) there should be an impression of eclectic list, and I intend to keep catalogue with the title "dogpawed". But friends in the *London* "friends" as I prefer to think of them suggest I should describe the remainder of my stock as "books dog wouldn't touch".

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## The OED

Sir, - How disappointing that the generous space you gave to a review (September 3) of the latest volume of a *Supplement to the OED* was squandered by somebody who disapproves in principle of alphabetized dictionaries at any level whatever.

Roy Harris implicitly rejects all generalizing about language use which, extraordinarily, he thinks precludes belief in "varying shades of semantic grey", an extreme simplistic position which neither Sir James Murray nor any present Oxford lexicographer ever held. The dictionary for which he makes an impassioned plea, which would fully describe "the very complex social and situational diversification of English", "the Englishman's vocabulary and his wife's, or his daughter's", would either be of infinite extent or of such a degree of particularization with respect to persons, times and places, as to be of no use or interest at all. And if one must generalize, a structuralist's generalization depends on several factors just as the traditional lexicographer's does: on evidence that has been collected - evidence which must still largely be taken from printed sources (great novels down to drivel level), though of course modern technology puts other resources at any editor's disposal; on reducing the language to "a clearly determinate number of verbal meanings"; on analysing words and uses that the lexicographer "never knew or used or saw before"; and on an interlocking system that is inevitably a theoretical construct, because the subsystems of the individual are infinitely variable and can never coincide with the total system revealed by the lexicographer's accumulated data.

Roy Harris nowhere in two TLS pages gives an inkling of what kind a work his substitute for a dictionary would be. Perhaps it would be in some ways reminiscent of a thesaurus of synonymy, with all the concomitant complications of cross-referencing and indexing. Anyway, he gives us no reason to believe that his method would deal with the overwhelming practical complexities of general lexicography at the level of the *OED* (there are 154 sections, and within them numberless subsections, in the entry for the verb *set*, and more to come in volume 4 of the *Supplement*). The existing building, it seems, in all its Gothic splendour, is to be demolished, leaving a dreaming professor of linguistics to turn over the rubble.

The Professor's indignation or "blasphemous impiety" is also exercised over the policies governing inclusion and exclusion of items and the choice of particular descriptive labels. But the literary preferences of the *OED* and its supplementary volumes are not put forward at the expense of the nonce innovations of reporters writing for a local paper (newspapers from Morecambe, Milton Keynes, Aberdeen, Nottingham, and many other places in this country and throughout the world, are very well represented in the supplementary volumes), or civil servants drafting documents, or the novelties of "ordinary people" (whoever he might think they are). These, as even a short examination of the vast *OED* files would show, are far too numerous for inclusion in any dictionary, however large. It is merely Harris's absurdly unsubstantiated inference that lexicographers believe that the world at large has "no business introducing new words at all, however useful". In fact if new words or meanings are truly useful they will generally be taken up by others and so merit inclusion under the normal criteria of frequency and use. The choice is not between some or all such nonce-formations, but between some or none.

Let it be remembered, too, that the *OED* is above all the scholarly possession of English (not German, French, Physics, etc) departments throughout the world, and of other lexicographers. (Of course, it is

mostly by-passed or ignored in the chilly semi-scientific works of professors of linguistics. Unfortunately "ordinary people" do not normally consult it but make do with derivative or smaller dictionaries. The supplementary volumes of the *OED*, like the parent work, register the strange and idiosyncratic language of the poets so that future generations of scholars will know what the words mean and where they occur. Sir James Murray and his colleagues have enriched the lives of generations of scholars all over the world interested in and deriving pleasure from the rare words of writers of former ages. The *hapax legomena* represent no more than the agreeable "hundreds and thousands" on top of an iced cake, but they help to make the cake what it should be.

The vast quotation files in the *OED* Department also form the basis of editorial judgments about

## to the editor

in fact, he only says "the celebrated Martin Heidegger, star pupil of the Jew Husserl, and himself later involved with Nazism". The depth of his involvement has been played down by his many philosophical admirers, but it can be estimated by reading the very rare book, consisting only of documents without a commentary, from which the photograph reproduced on this page is taken: Guido Schneeberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger*.

The popularity of Hannah Arendt among the intellectuals of her time illustrates Julien Benda's thesis of *La trahison des clercs* - the treason of the intellectuals. This treason is their romantic attempt to be cleverer than reason itself and to extol romanticism from a philosophy of nostalgia to a philosophy of power - the power of unreason. (Today they attack reason by associating it with the atom bomb.)

The vast quotation files in the *OED* Department also form the basis of editorial judgments about

It occurs to me, too, that Arendt's most overrated phrase - "the banality of evil" - could well be in its unconscious origin a defence of Heidegger and of romanticism. If evil is, in essence, banal, then (our unconscious tends to interpret "is" as identity) Heidegger and romanticism cannot be evil; for, surely, they are not banal?

Incidentally, Ernest Gellner's question about the (some?) Viennese can perhaps be answered a little differently: their romanticism is innocuous because it is part of their nature (Ferdinand Raimund). The other part is laughing about themselves and their romanticism (Johann Nestroy). Though this, I admit, is flattery.

KARL POPPER,  
Penn, Buckinghamshire.

## 'Young Edward Gibbon'

Sir, - W. B. Carnochan, in his review (August 6) of Patricia Craddock's *Young Edward Gibbon*, quotes her disbelief that Gibbon could have "lied" about so important a matter as what Carnochan calls the "famous story that he conceived the idea of writing the *Decline and Fall* amidst the ruins of the Capitol". He quotes as well her opinion that the incident "really happened" and that "we must in some sense respect [Gibbon's] judgment of its symbolic importance: Rome, twilight, ruins, and friars in some sense caused the *Decline and Fall*". The drafts of Gibbon's *Memoirs of My Own Life* (British Library Add MSS 34874) reveal, however, that if Gibbon did not lie about the incident, he enjoyed three successively improved recollections of it, each differing in significant details and each making for a more dramatically effective piece of writing than the last.

In the first version of the famous incident Gibbon wrote: In my Journal the place and moment of conception are recorded;

the fifteenth of October 1764, in the close of evening, as I sat musing in the Church of the Zoccolanti or Franciscan friars, while they were singing Vespers in the Temple of Jupiter on the ruins of the Capitol.

In the second version he stated: It was on the fifteenth of October, in the gloom of evening, as I sat musing on the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were chanting their litanies in the temple of Jupiter, that I conceived my first thought of my history.

And in the third Gibbon wrote: It was at Rome, on the fifteenth of October, 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol while the barefooted friars were singing Vespers in the temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the City first started to my mind.

Heidegger is seated on the left of the uniformed Gnaubmann, Arthur Gopfer, Chairman of the National Socialist Science Organization. (See Sir Karl Popper's letter on this page.)

the acceptability of uses labelled erroneous, catchrest or the like. These judgments are not wild stabs in the dark, though they may appear so to the limited vision of one reviewer in his quotationless study. The *OED* and supplementary volumes represent not just the knowledge of any individual, but decades of accumulated evidence of usage and of public attitudes and declarations, of the skill and knowledge of numerous lexicographers, and of the freely given comments and advice of scholars and well-wishers throughout the world. Lexicography at this level is a cumulative and corporate exercise. A single structuralist, in the dimness of his study, cannot see the structure, and never will be able to.

When people like Professor Harris have finished ignoring the *OED* and bring out their new construction kits, I suspect that they will attempt to build a thematic barn, with unalphabetized bins and stalls for kinship terms, colour words and vocabulary from the other closed systems they love so much. If these notional builders ever look up from their unconstructed barn, they might begin to be a little impressed by the castle of the *OED*, *entia genera* of the work of giants, as the Anglo-Saxons would have called it, and might just wonder if their small hammers and nails might prove to be inadequate for such a task.

It looks very much as if Gibbon's judgment of the incident's "symbolic importance" was scarcely inferior to Craddock's, and as if for this reason the *Decline and Fall* "in some sense" caused Rome, twilight, ruins, and friars. Perhaps I am not alone in continuing nevertheless to relish this imperishable purple patch, and in continuing to regard it as essentially - Craddock would say "only mythically" - true.

RANDOLPH BUFANO,  
746 17th Avenue, Menlo Park, California 94025.

Sir, - In his review of *Young Edward Gibbon* by Patricia Craddock (August 6), W. B. Carnochan wrote: "The hydrocele in his testicles that eventually brought on his death makes a nice psychobiographical emblem." This, I found disturbing from a medical point of view. I struggled to think how treatment of a hydrocele might cause death - the use of the plural of testicle and the use of the word "it" were obviously incorrect - and, failing, looked at the excellent biography (1968) of Gibbon by Sir Gavin de Beer in which the post-mortem findings made by Henry Cline (1750-1827), an anatomist and surgeon of note, are given.

As I had expected, Gibbon had had an irreducible left inguinal hernia since his days in the Militia, and no hydrocele. The rapid enlargement of the scrotal swelling was due to the collection of ascitic fluid from the peritoneal cavity secondary to cirrhosis of the liver. Liver cirrhosis had

been recently described for the first time by Matthew Baillie (1761-1823), who with Cline had also attended Gibbon in the last few weeks of his life. Fluid was aspirated on three occasions, with twelve pints drawn off on January 13, 1794. On January 16, Gibbon woke feeling better than for some time, but then abdominal pain set in and he died from general peritonitis "with only his servant present, peaceful in mind and in full possession of his mental faculties".

MILO KEYNES,  
3 Brunswick Walk, Cambridge.

## 'Edmund Ironside'

Sir, - In his elegantly written piece on *Edmund Ironside* (August 13) Eric Sams mentions that in 1963 I drew attention to a Shakespearean image-cluster in the play. But even twenty years ago I was cagey enough to offer alternative interpretations of my discovery, saying that it "may be thought of either as supporting Everett's theory or as raising doubts as to the validity of this sort of evidence" for authorship. I went on to cite another Shakespearean image-cluster in Shelley's poem "The Boat on the Serchio".

This is not to deny the interest of Mr Sams's reappraisal of *Edmund Ironside* or the desirability of keeping an open mind on matters connected with the Shakespeare canon. Can any hard evidence be found for the date of the anonymous play's composition?

MacD. P. JACKSON,  
English Department, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand.

## A Palindrome Conference

Sir, - We have taken a keen interest in the correspondence on palindromes which has appeared in your columns from time to time (for example, the letter in your issue of January 15 this year, concerning the authorship of the well-known palindrome "T. Eliot, top bard, notes putrid tang emanating, is sad, I'd assign it a name: 'Gnat dirt upset on drab pot toilet.'").

Under the heading "Palindromes", the most recent edition of Brewer's *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* discusses "palindrome dates", such as 27.9.1972. Only three more such dates will occur this century: 28.9.1982, 19.9.1991 and 29.9.1992 (After that, one will have to wait until the twenty-second century for another - 10.1.2101 - unless one is prepared to cheat slightly and allow the somewhat unsatisfactory 10.02.2001.)

September 28, 1982, therefore seems to us a most appropriate date to begin a Palindrome Conference. Those participating will attempt to beat the record for the longest palindrome ever composed, and to outdo in ingeniousness both Alastair Reid (the composer of "T. Eliot, etc") and the anonymous inventor of the palindromes listed by Lord Norwich in his *Christmas Cracker* for 1971, such as "Now stop, Major-General: are negro jampots won?"

Those wishing to participate in the Conference should write to us immediately.

EDWARD LLEWELLYN,  
Flas Llewellyn Arts Intercommunication Group, Plas Llewellyn, St. Neerrot ffe, Gwent, Wales.

## Helcule Poilok

Sir, - Bay, I, coppers 'a' telefence (Q Kob, zis 'is' nols qiffence jan I, expeked) in ze akkiele by Paul Jen- nink in jous issue of 13 August? Qs Jennink betes su Akava Kiskl's fic- tional bepoquive, Helcule Poilok (Qs ze "wikle way cells"), as "one folk of skale fionckian", ze Nonslew Poilok in in fack of Beiljan oiflin. Zis na seen pebanik buk, as Balc Akava's gaulfise blockwafep, I feel I should put ze pekob slafp.

JANET MORGAN,  
Home Close, Elsfeld, Oxfordshire.

More letters appear on p 974.



## to the editor

## Frege's Thought

Sir, - Many of the issues raised by Gilbert Harman in his review (April 16) of my two books on Frege, which I have only just had an opportunity to study, are too large, and too vaguely adumbrated by Harman, to be pursued in correspondence. I pick three about which he is more explicit.

(1) Harman claims that the question whether the complexity of a sentence reflects the complexity of the thought it expresses, or serves in some other way to determine what thought is being expressed, is without substance. His ground is that abstract objects like thoughts and numbers do not literally have parts. If he were right, this would furnish a strong answer to those I was criticizing for attributing the second view to Frege and denying that he held the first. Thoughts, as Frege conceives them, are, however, unlike numbers in the crucial respect. This is precisely because, for him, the identity of a thought is shown by what is involved in grasping it: no one who has grasped the thought expressed by one sentence and that expressed by another can be in doubt whether they are the same. Hence, although to speak of the parts of a thought is indeed to speak metaphorically, it is a metaphor on which Frege insisted: the internal structure of a thought is that which it must be apprehended as having by anyone who grasps the thought. If thoughts were not intrinsically complex, or if their complexity bore no relation to the structure of the sentences expressing them, the same thought could be expressed by sentences with wholly different structures. It is precisely this which Frege denied. By contrast, there is no sense to asking whether the number ten can be grasped only as the product of two and five, because numbers - as opposed to the senses of numerical expressions - are not grasped. This is why Frege says that the sense of a part of an expression is part of the sense of the whole, although the reference of the part is not part of the reference of the whole. If it is nonsense to speak of the parts of a thought, then much that Frege wrote on the subject is nonsense. I do not think so; but in any case I was concerned with how to interpret Frege.

(2) Harman appears to believe that Kripke has shown that we should be right to say that if Jane Smith had never heard of Harman, or semiotics, or of Bressanone, she would nevertheless come to know that Harman was attending a conference on semiotics in Bressanone, and having grounds for supposing him to be speaking the truth. Most readers will surely agree with me that she would know more than that. It is a conference called "Harman" is attending a conference on some subject called "semiotics" in a place called "Bressanone". Harman should study his authorities more carefully: the distinction is precisely the same as that drawn by Kripke between knowing that "Horses are called 'horses'" expresses a truth, and knowing the truth that it expresses. Neglect of this distinction is in some contexts fatal.

(3) In defence of Kripke's claims concerning rigid designation, Harman repeats a stock argument, which "Pseudo-Dionysius" is introduced as a proper name of whoever wrote a certain treatise. Harman insists that there is a difference in "modal status" between the sentences:

- (a) Pseudo-Dionysius never wrote a line.  
(b) The author of the treatise never wrote a line.

It is crucial that these two sentences are themselves unmodalized, viz contain no expression such as "might have" or "possibly". It is also vital to the argument to maintain that the difference between them in modal status does not obtain merely on

Kripke's theory, but would be recognized, in advance of any theory, by anyone who knows the language, and that his recognition of it would manifest an essential ingredient of his knowledge of the language. The difference is supposed to be that the proposition expressed by (a), though false, is not necessarily false, while that expressed by (b) is necessarily false. I defy anyone to make a convincing case that these judgments would be unanimously made by all competent speakers of English uncorrupted by philosophy, and that their doing so would be essential to their mastery of the language. In everyday discourse, we are not much given to assigning modal status - contingency or necessity - to propositions; rather, we import modal verbs or adverbs into our sentences. We do, of course, say things like "That can't be true": but that would be a natural comment on the assertion that Pseudo-Dionysius never wrote a line. To make out that such a comment is irrelevant to his theory, Kripke needs to invoke his distinction between epistemic and metaphysical necessity, a distinction of which many ordinary speakers of English are innocent. To convey the sense in which the assertion of (a) may be ruled as only contingently false, one would have to resort to saying, for example

(c) Pseudo-Dionysius might have died in infancy.  
This will probably not produce a conviction of the relevant difference between (a) and (b), since

(d) The author of the treatise might have died in infancy.  
looks true, too: further doctrine has now to be invoked to explain this away. It would not matter, indeed, if (d) were unhesitatingly recognized by everyone as false: for we should, in this way, have justified our according a distinct modal status to the two unmodalized sentences (a) and (b) only on the strength of the difference in truth-value between the modalized ones (c) and (d). It is, in my view, simply silly to claim, as an essential ingredient of an ordinary understanding of the sentences (a) and (b), a recognition of a difference in respect of modal status: to do so is to confuse a particular theory with the facts of ordinary linguistic practice which the theory seeks to explain.

MICHAEL DUMMETT.  
New College, Oxford.

## Tipu's Tiger

Sir, - Tipu's Tiger, illustrated in your issue of August 8, is more than a painted wooden effigy. The body of the tiger contains a growl and scream mechanism operated by turning a handle which pumps bellows. Tipu, the Sultan of the Mysore, was reported to be so delighted with this toy that he "passed hours in his music room with an attendant turning the handle of the machine". This unusual machine, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, is fully described in *Clockwork Music* by Arthur Ord-Hume, who restored it. The V & A publish a colour poster which shows that the golden tiger has his fur arranged in a sort of falling-leaf pattern. The victim of his attention, measuring 5ft 10in, may be Dutch.

MADEAU STEWART.  
3 Lawrence Lane, Burford, Oxfordshire.

## Rochester and Quarles

Sir, - In his *Attribution in Restoration Poetry* David Vieth discusses the "unsolved problem of authorship" presented by the poem "On Rome's Pardon", which first appeared in the pirated *Poems on several occasions by the Right Honourable, the E. of Rochester* (1680). Vieth summarizes the evidence and concludes "I am not convinced that [Rochester] wrote it".

One piece of evidence Vieth did not consider is that "On Rome's Pardon" is a reworking of a poem in Francis Quarles's *Divine Fancies* (1632) 3. 86:

On Rome's pardon  
If Rome could pardon sins, as Romans hold,  
And if such Pardons might be bought for Gold,  
An easie Judgement might determine which  
To choose: To be religious, or else rich;  
Nay Rome does pardon: Pardon may be sold;  
We'll search no Scriptures; But the Mines, for Gold.  
The 1680 version attributed to Rochester:  
If Rome can pardon Sins, as Romans hold,  
And if those Pardons, can be bought and sold,  
It were no Sin, to adore and worship Gold.  
If they can purchase Pardons with a Sum,  
For Sins they may commit in time to come,  
And for Sins past, 'tis very well for Rome.

At this rate they are happy't that have most,  
They'll purchase Heav'n, at their own proper cost.  
Alas! the Poor! all that are so are lost.

Whence came this knack, or when did it begin?  
What Author have they, or who brought it in?  
Did Christ, e're keep a Custom-house for Sin?

Some subtle Devil, without more ado:  
Did certainly this sly invention brew:  
To gull 'em of their Souls, and Money too.

The discovery of the Quarles original paradoxically strengthens Rochester's claim for the reworking. Some critics, notably V. de Sola Pinto and Anne Barton, have argued that we should credit Rochester with the variation on Quarles's "Why dost thou shade thy lovely face?" (Emblems 1635, 3.7) - significantly also in rhymed triplets. Rochester used rhymed triplets in "Upon Nothing" and Harold Love has pointed out to me that Quarles uses the form in Emblems 3, 12, 3, 13 and 4, 13 as well as 3, 7, and also that 2, 15 of the *Divine Fancies* contains germs for "Upon Nothing".

KEITH WALKER.  
Department of English, University College London, Gower Street London WC1.

## B. B. Tomashevsky

Sir, - In Henry Gifford's review of *Angliyskaya poeziya v russkikh perevodka: XIV-XIX veka* edited by M. P. Alekseyev, V. V. Zakharov and B. B. Tomashevsky (August 13) there is an annoying mistake which is very often made in Western countries and sometimes even in Russian. Gifford writes, "This anthology includes three of Donne's *Songs and Sonnets* (two in apt versions by one of its editors, Boris Tomashevsky, here Gifford mixes up two Tomashevskys. The eminent Pushkin scholar was Boris Viktorovich Tomashevsky who died in 1957, while one of the editors of the reviewed anthology and the author of two translations from Donne is Boris Borisovich Tomashevsky, a son of Boris Viktorovich Tomashevsky. B. B. Tomashevsky was never a Pushkin scholar, although he was an eminent translator of English and American poetry and prose, and also an outstanding editor of Russian and American literature in Russia. He died in 1974.

GEORGE BEN.  
7 Brondesbury Park, London NW6.

In Humphrey Carpenter's review of *The Helms of Tom Brown* by Isabel Oulby (TLS, July 25) the date of William Adams's *The Cherry Stones* has been wrongly printed as 1815; it should have been 1851.

## Among this week's contributors

PETER AVERY is the author of *Modern Iran, 1965*, and the translator of *The Rubiyat of Omar Khayyam*, 1979.

RICHARD BROWN is co-editor of *The James Joyce Broadsheet*.

ALAN BROWNJOHN's most recent collection of poems is *A Night in the Gazebo*, 1981.

BILL BUFORD is Editor of *Granta*.

HUMPHREY CARPENTER's biography of W. H. Auden was published last year.

JOHN CASEY is the author of *The Language of Criticism*, 1966.

DAVID EDGAR's most recent work for the stage was his adaptation of *Nicholas Nickleby*.

D. J. ENRIGHT's *Collected Poems* appeared earlier this year.

SIR JOHN HACKETT's *The Third World War: The Untold Story* was reviewed in last week's issue.

C. J. HRYWOOD is a lecturer in the history of the Near and Middle East at the School of Oriental and African Studies.

JAMES HUNTER is the author of *The Making of the Crofting Community*, 1976.

JAMES JOLL's books include *Intellectuals in Politics*, 1960, and *Gramsci*, 1977.

HUGH KENNEDY is the author of *The Early Abbasid Caliphate*, 1981.

ERIC KORN is an antiquarian book-seller.

PETER LIENHARDT is the author of *The Medicine Man - Swifa Ya Nguni*, 1968.

MALCOLM YAPP's most recent book is *Strategies of British India: Iran and Afghanistan 1798-1850*, 1980.

MICHAEL MALLETT's books include *Mercenaries and their Masters: Warfare in Renaissance Italy*, 1973.

EDWARD MORTIMER is a leader-writer on *The Times*. His *Faith and Power: the Politics of Islam* will be published in October.

ROBIN OSTLE edited *Studies in Modern Arabic Literature*, 1976.

ROGER OWEN is the author of *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800-1914*, 1981.

IDRIS PARRY's collection of essays *Hand to Mouth* was published earlier this year.

S. S. PRAWER's *Heine's Jewish Comedy* will be published later this year.

J. I. M. STEWART's new novel, *A Villa in Rome*, will be published in October.

ANDRAJ SOUPE is a lecturer in English Literature at the University of Cairo. A collection of her short stories will be published in Britain next spring.

P. J. SULLIVAN's books include *Propertius*, 1976.

MALCOLM VALE is the author of *Wu and Chivalry*, 1981.

P. J. VATTIOTIS's books include *The Modern History of Egypt*, 1968.

J. K. L. WALKER's novels include *Horse Latitudes*, 1966.

CHRIS WALLACE-CRABBE's books include *The Emotions Are Not Skilled Workers*, 1980, and *Splinters*, 1981.

## Fifty years on: Stella Gibbons

The TLS of September 8, 1932, carried the following review of *Cold Comfort Farm* by Stella Gibbons:

It is to be hoped that all the tenants and owners of starved and benighted farms, and all those stark and powerful realists who write of country life, and that of Sussex in particular, as mildewed with perversion and illegitimacy, will pay close attention to *Cold Comfort Farm*, by Stella Gibbons (Longmans, 7s.6d. net), and feel a new hope and happiness dawning even from Sussex. Unlike many satirists and mockers, Miss Gibbons has a definite remedy to suggest for each and every ill that is developed by the farming families of fiction. She brings about a revolution in *Cold Comfort Farm* before she is done with it and makes no secret of the formula.

It is quite time that the earthy and passionate novel was parodied, and

Miss Gibbons with a wicked and witty pen has seen to it that all the peculiarities of the drearier back-to-the-land school have been ridiculed. She has jumbled her author together, but like well-made strawberry jam they bob about whole and recognizable in her bubbling pot: the writer who deals wholesale in insanity and keeps a horrid old woman immured in a dismal room to goad on her mad family to desperation, the writer who describes religious mania and hell-fire sects meeting in "a sort of dog kennel," and all the other earnest expositions of breeding, the mother-complex, arge bulls and mares larger than life, betrayed girls and half-wit innocents who fall into the duck pond. Her book is burlesque but it is also a good story; neither her invention nor her even good spirits fall half-way, and the end is quite as lively and amusing as the beginning.

## Information, please

Sir Compton Mackenzie: documents, personal reminiscences etc sought; for a biography to be published by Chatto and Windus.

Isle Martin, by Ullapool, Ross-shire, IV26 2TN.

*Romantic Parodies 1797-1832*: this selection of parodies of the English Romantic Poets is nearing completion; any information about little-known parodies which may not have come to our attention.

David A. Kent.  
Department of English, York University, Downsview, Ontario M3J 1P3.

Henry Sweet (1845-1912), philologist and phonetician: autograph material sought; for a biography.

M. K. C. MacMahon.  
Department of Linguistics and Phonetics, The University, Glasgow G12 8QQ.

*Nicholas Venetie*, late seventeenth-century French physician, author of *De la generation de l'homme, ou le secret de l'amour conjugal*, any information about Venetie or his book for an edition of its English

translation, *The Art of Conquest Love Revealed*.  
R. S. Potter.  
Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BP.

*Beatrice Harraden (1864-1930)*: information, papers, pictures and reminiscences sought; also copies of her books and information about whereabouts of her manuscripts, particularly that of *Ships that Pass in the Night*.  
Gilbert K. Westgate Jr.  
9226 W. Golf Road, Des Plaines, Illinois 60016.

Derek Jackson (1906-82): personal reminiscences of him and his twin brother, particularly from their school days and their time as undergraduates at Cambridge; for a memoir.

Diana Mosley.  
Temple de la Gloire, 91400 Orsay, France.

Lady Rachel Russell (1636-1728): originals of her letters written 1672-1682 and first printed by Mary Berry in 1819.

Lots G. Schwoerer.  
George Washington University, Washington, DC 20052.

## LITERATURE

## The comprehensive ideal

## John Casey

PIERS GRAY  
T. S. Eliot's Intellectual and Poetic Development 1909-1922  
273pp. Brighton: Harvester Press.  
£22.50.  
0 7108 0046 0

Lucretius and Dante each wrote a poetic masterpiece that also expressed a system of philosophy. The achievement is as rare as the ambition is common. Wordsworth never wrote his philosophical poem; and Johnson said of Pope's *Essay on Man* that "never was penury of knowledge and vulgarity of sentiment so happily disguised". The professional philosopher who is also a great poet is one of the rarest of beings.

T. S. Eliot was a professional philosopher in the modern, academic sense of the term. His thesis on F. H. Bradley, several philosophical articles, a Harvard seminar paper, "The interpretation of primitive ritual" (much of which is published for the first time in Piers Gray's book), strongly suggest that he could have had a distinguished career as an academic philosopher, had he not chosen a better course.

The pioneer work on Eliot's philosophy and its pervasive presence in his poetry was done by Hugh Kenner in *The Invisible Poet* and there is not a very great deal of importance to be added to what Dr Gray has done, with skill and delicacy, is to show in much more detail how the poetry and criticism in the period up to and including *The Waste Land* reflects Eliot's philosophical ideas, and how Eliot's critical language is redolent of the concepts of philosophical Idealism.

There are dangers in extracting a set of propositions from a poet's work and presenting them as his "beliefs". This is partly because the doctrines a poet entertains in his poetry need not be ones he actually holds. (We can fully appreciate the "Ode on Intimations of Immortality" without attributing to Wordsworth an actual belief in Platonism.) But also beliefs may have a different existence in poetry from the one they have in philosophy or religion. Certainly Eliot was himself profoundly sceptical about the relations between thought and belief in poetry, and thought and belief outside it. He said that poetry offered not thought but its "emotional equivalent", that it was Shakespeare's business "to express the greatest emotional intensity of his time based on whatever his time happened to think", and that "neither Shakespeare nor Dante did any real thinking". Yet he confessed that his dislike of Shelley's verse might arise from a dislike of Shelley's beliefs. He also once suggested that literary criticism would need to be completed by criticism from a definite ethical and religious position. Apart from some glancing blows at Lawrence, he never attempted this "completion"; and *After Strange Gods* was never reprinted.

Eliot's uncertainty about belief and poetry probably stems from the very philosophical tradition in which he was educated. It is the common doctrine of Idealism that the possibilities of thought determine the possibilities of experience. "Facts" are interpretations of experience from particular "points of view". Hence it will be natural for an Idealist philosopher to hold that the coherence and objectivity of the world as human beings construct and interpret it will be guaranteed only by the cooperative endeavour of a human community which unites all "points of

view" into a comprehensive whole. Another characteristic Idealist doctrine - that truth is a matter of "coherence" among propositions rather than of "correspondence" between particular propositions and particular states of affairs - will go with this. The completeness of truth will be the completeness of coherence, the largest comprehensiveness of points of view. This comprehensiveness will seek also to relate the present to the past. The human cooperative endeavour to produce a coherent world, and to relate past to present, might result in a "tradition". The idea of tradition - a live and practical sense of the relation of our lives to those of our ancestors - will become pivotal in our understanding of human society and human knowledge. It was F. H. Bradley - Eliot's philosophical Master - who defined history as the expression of the "human tradition".

Eliot's most famous essay is "Tradition and the Individual Talent". In that essay he sets out an ideal of order and comprehensiveness expressed in extravagant terms: No poet, no artist of any sort, has his complete meaning alone. . . . The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new . . . work of art among them, if ever so slightly, be altered. It is often not appreciated how unconvulsive, indeed how subversive Eliot's idea of tradition is. The whole existing order is altered by the really new work of art. The present alters the past just as the past influences the present. Eliot's idea of tradition is wholly anti-historical. We create the past from a sense of what can be done in the present. Eliot wishes to see the whole of European literature as part of a timeless present. In this he is

very close to Ezra Pound who wrote, in *The Spirit of Romance*, of a literature "where the real time is independent of the apparent, and where many dead men are our grandchildren's contemporaries, while many of our contemporaries have already been gathered into Abraham's bosom, or some other fitting receptacle". Eliot's claim for tradition is that it enables a critic to have a "perception of relation that involves an organized view of the whole course of European poetry from Homer". And if one takes that claim seriously it will be very natural to derive it from a philosophical standpoint - in this case what F. H. Bradley says in his influential essay "The Presuppositions of Critical History":

every man's present standpoint ought to determine his belief in respect to all past events; but to no man do I dictate what his present standpoint ought to be. *Consistency* is the word that I have emphasized.

The trouble is that neither Eliot nor Pound really attempted, as critics, to combine their sense of what it was possible for the individual talent to make new with that ideal completeness that would make it possible for a poet to write with the whole of literature from Homer in his bones. The past they give us is extremely selective, even fragmentary. Eliot's relative lack of interest in the Romantics, in Pope, in Milton, and, for that matter, in Shakespeare - all suggests a sense of the past that is guided less by an ideal of comprehensiveness, and much more by his central creative interests. Matthew Arnold who, with his "touchstones", produced a comparably "timeless" notion of literary tradition, and who attempted to place the English Romantics within a classical tradition of "high seriousness" - to see them as modern classics - produced a picture of the past

and its existence in the present that is much more acceptable to the conventional literary historian. Piers Gray relates Eliot's idea of criticism to his poetry, and sets both against the ideal of "comprehensiveness" implied by the Idealist tradition. He moves far directly from the poetry to the philosophy - for instance reading *The Waste Land* as expressing a search for "an absolute degree of comprehensiveness". The trouble with looking for such a direct relation is that it leads one to read the poem as simply ironical: what we are shown is a gap between the actual experience of modern man and a postulated ideal of comprehensiveness. And it is true that the poem opens with an allusion to "Chaucer's *Prologue*" as well as to the late Latin poem *Perigrinatio Veneris* - poems which enact an awareness of the mind of Europe and of our own country: ("April is the cruellest month, breeding / Lilies out of the dead land"). It is true also that the "mind of Europe" rapidly degenerates into the mind of *Mittel Europa*, helpless individuals helplessly reliving their personal memories: ("And when we were children, staying at the archduke's, / My cousin's, he took out on a sled, / And I was frightened.") But the contrast between fragmentary modern experience and a postulated ideal unity does not produce simply a painful irony. The contrast between horrible or painful scenes in the present - the neurotically Cleopatra, the seduced typist - and eloquent versions of them from Shakespeare or Sappho dramatizes the present and gives it an intense vitality. Eliot is doing what he learned from the French Symbolists - finding the greatest possible intensity in the imagery of modern life. The gap between the fragmentary and the comprehensive in the poetry is a quite different character - it is much more complex than an analogous gap between incomplete and complete experience as this is understood by philosophy. That is to say, poetry may be ambivalent about such a disparity, whereas Idealist philosophy is governed by a much simpler notion of "comprehensiveness". In philosophy the fully comprehensive is the fully real; whereas in *The Waste Land* the vitality of the fragmentary is itself fully real.

Dr Gray does not entirely escape the danger of simplifying Eliot as a poet by seeing him as making his poetry out of, or into, a philosophy. For instance he uses a psychological argument from Janet about "double selves" to conclude that Proust ("Let us go then, you and I . . .") is in a "Hell of loneliness". Yet surely "Proust" has no burden as simple as that. As much as anything else it is a poem about poetic language itself, about the possibility of using Victorian magniloquence to express almost nothing at all, a poem that is playfully ambivalent about the seriousness of Proust's predicament. That the protagonist's self-consciousness may be painful is not something that needs to be suppressed - but nor need his absurdity be suppressed.

However if Dr Gray as a critic sometimes oversimplifies, this is because he has a proper anxiety to bring out Eliot's philosophical convictions as clearly as possible. And what emerges is a much stronger sense than we had before of how profoundly imbued with philosophy is Eliot's imagination, both as critic and poet; how Eliot never simply forsook his philosophical inheritance, but took it into his central creative interests; and how the philosophical traditions of Royce and Bradley - unlike modern analytical philosophy - can enter into a man's creative imagination and form his culture.

Such circumstances Miller is unwilling to provide, preferring to seduce his reader into a vision of the world as an endless display of repetitions, either of the first or of the second kind. As a critic of the novels he deals with, he is concerned not so much to press home his reading but to question the possibility of a conclusive or dominant understanding and to leave the books "open" to further investigation.

These aims he may certainly be said to have achieved. But there are those readers of English fiction for whom the lack of philosophic self-questioning in literary criticism has never been a pressing problem. To such readers it will seem that apparent simplicities have been converted into deep mysteries here, without a clearly defined gain. Such readers may feel that in the self-sustaining quality of the argument and in the elevation of critical "openness" useful and far from pernicious procedures of literary critical validation are neglected almost beyond recall.

## Retelling the same old story

## Richard Brown

J. HILLIS MILLER  
Fiction and Repetition: Seven English Novels  
250pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £12.50.  
0 631 13032 2

The introductory chapter of J. Hillis Miller's new book establishes a distinction of considerable subtlety and philosophic seriousness between two forms of repetition. The first "Platonic", or "Biblical" form sees the world as a series of copies stemming from original and ideal archetypes; the second "post-Nietzschean" kind sees a world where things are fundamentally disparate but may seem to repeat each other, as it were, coincidentally. The distinction is offered as a decisive one and yet both forms of repetition, we are told, may function simultaneously or indifferently in any of the novels that are to be discussed.

The second part of the introduction is more of an apology: a personal and professional affirmation of the value of reading literary works and a resolution to test out the deconstructive enquiries of the past few years by an exploration of the kinds of readings of fiction that they have made possible. This may seem a familiar appeal, but it is one that has a peculiar resonance and an affecting nakedness of tone coming, as it does here, *ex cathedra* from the Delphi of deconstruction at Yale.

The as-yet-undeconstructed reader (or the reader who is searching for ways to become deconstructed) may take encouragement from this latter part of the chapter and hope for much from the essays on seven well-known nineteenth and twentieth-century novels which follow.

There is an element of familiarity in the approaches Hillis Miller adopts. Conrad's *Lord Jim* is discussed in terms of the aliveness and mystery of its central character and in terms of the shifting perspectives of its narrative structure that have struck all its critics as crucial. If *Lord Jim* is a novel full of "beliefs", then *Wuthering Heights* is full of "listeners", who, like Lockwood

may be seen as "emblems" of the reader's situation. Thackeray's *Henry Esmond* is brought into play through the Oedipal suggestiveness of its plot, its narrative status as a supposed reminiscence told in the third person, and through its persistent irony. The famous implicit seduction scene in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* is given a new treatment, and in *Mrs Dalloway* and *Between the Acts*, problems of consciousness, of female identity and of the opposition between creative unification and dispersal so characteristic of Woolf's fiction are invoked.

Sceptical readers will be reassured by these vestiges of traditional criticism and they may be tempted to value the readings offered for their qualities of thoughtfulness, imagination and critical insight, much as if deconstruction had not been thought of. But this is only a small part of the story for the critical readings are not isolated essays but part of a broader attempt to investigate the function of repetition in fiction. Both the kind of repetitions discussed and the manner of their treatment, though they will amaze and delight a certain kind of reader, will do little to appease the spokesman for traditional forms of literary criticism and scholarship.

Rather than naming, classifying and putting into historical order different types of repetition in fiction, or seeking out blatant repetitive devices (like the word-for-word repetition of the first paragraph of George Moore's *Early Waters* in its pre-pubescent chapter, or that Borges story "The Plot", which is pared down to two re-enacting paragraphs), Miller defies classificatory and historical expectations. His procedure is to take what he finds in these seven great novels and artfully accommodate it to his theme.

Repetition is discovered in multiple recounting of the same events by one narrator or by many; it may arise when elements in a romantic scene, experienced by one generation of characters in a novel, are echoed in romances of the next generation; it may consist in a potentially significant likeness of names between characters, in the deliberate recurrence of motifs or in the repetition of apparently trivial details - like the colour red. It may

consist in the way that a novel repeats its effect on reader after reader; the way that a novelist returns to favourite themes in several works; the way that a plot may recall earlier plots, like the Oedipus story. We are even asked to see a form of repetition in the novel's re-presentation of events or supposed events in the world. When reading a novel, Miller claims, we are competent to deal with all these levels of repetition at the same time, and we certainly need to have this kind of competence to get through his study.

Each novel is presented as an interlocking texture of repetitions: not mere rhetorical tropes which may be classified and identified as subsidiary to the novel's main drift, but themselves determining the possibilities for the ultimate impossibility of deeper meaning. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* is no longer "about" the seduction of a village girl, the cruel workings of Fate, turn-of-hoof or whatever one might previously have thought, but is held to be "a novel about repetition". All the novels are held to be "about" repetition. This is a proposition which, on the face of it, has a certain uneasiness, but it is one that Miller makes little real attempt to argue or support, for it is built in to the logic of his approach that not only novels but the whole world may be perceived as a dazzling interplay of likenesses, if we only care to look at it in this way.

Miller's own argument, with its disavowal of conventional forms of historical validation and its refusal of the "empirical" mechanics of categorization and verification, becomes itself an interlocking texture of repetitions. Each of his chapters echoes the others, either in the focus of its attention or in the phrasing. The book, his first for ten years, repeats aspects of his previous work, both in its attention to authors like Hardy whom he has investigated so suggestively in the past and also in considerations about narrative, meaning and transcendence that are reminiscent of his *Forms of Victorian Fiction* and *The Disappearance of God*. Miller consciously exploits the repetitions that may occur in his own writing in order to further his argument and, in this respect, he follows Kierkegaard

and its existence in the present that is much more acceptable to the conventional literary historian. Piers Gray relates Eliot's idea of criticism to his poetry, and sets both against the ideal of "comprehensiveness" implied by the Idealist tradition. He moves far directly from the poetry to the philosophy - for instance reading *The Waste Land* as expressing a search for "an absolute degree of comprehensiveness". The trouble with looking for such a direct relation is that it leads one to read the poem as simply ironical: what we are shown is a gap between the actual experience of modern man and a postulated ideal of comprehensiveness. And it is true that the poem opens with an allusion to "Chaucer's *Prologue*" as well as to the late Latin poem *Perigrinatio Veneris* - poems which enact an awareness of the mind of Europe and of our own country: ("April is the cruellest month, breeding / Lilies out of the dead land"). It is true also that the "mind of Europe" rapidly degenerates into the mind of *Mittel Europa*, helpless individuals helplessly reliving their personal memories: ("And when we were children, staying at the archduke's, / My cousin's, he took out on a sled, / And I was frightened.") But the contrast between fragmentary modern experience and a postulated ideal unity does not produce simply a painful irony. The contrast between horrible or painful scenes in the present - the neurotically Cleopatra, the seduced typist - and eloquent versions of them from Shakespeare or Sappho dramatizes the present and gives it an intense vitality. Eliot is doing what he learned from the French Symbolists - finding the greatest possible intensity in the imagery of modern life. The gap between the fragmentary and the comprehensive in the poetry is a quite different character - it is much more complex than an analogous gap between incomplete and complete experience as this is understood by philosophy. That is to say, poetry may be ambivalent about such a disparity, whereas Idealist philosophy is governed by a much simpler notion of "comprehensiveness". In philosophy the fully comprehensive is the fully real; whereas in *The Waste Land* the vitality of the fragmentary is itself fully real.



## Cornell

In June of 1940, the German army moved across France and, rapidly overcoming French resistance, seized Paris. Thus began four years of Nazi occupation. One of the most important, yet least understood French responses to the disaster of 1940 was the phenomenon of collaborationism—the acceptance of fascism as an ideology.



"Gordon excels in his description of fascist momentum from Marcel Déat in late 1941, to Jacques Doriot in 1942, to Joseph Darnaud in late 1943, and in a general way from reform and political action to violent anti-Communism, and finally to a mindless activism that subverted order while claiming to defend it... Gordon's book has many striking qualities. It is clearly laid out and it is a mine of information. The political history of collaborationism has now been done." —*Times Literary Supplement*

"Gordon describes the three major and three minor collaborationist groups in France, all of which were ideologically committed to fascism and all of which had sprouted on French soil before the collapse in 1940... Gordon's important book helps to explain an uncomfortable chapter in France's recent past." —*Choice*

"Two strong features of the book are its explanation of the origins and behavior of the collaborationists and the portraits of the major collaborationist leaders... Thoroughly researched and well written." —*History: Reviews of New Books*

"This will be the definitive work on a subject that has only been treated in a cursory manner by historians to date. *Collaborationism in France during the Second World War* is full of sound, often brilliant analysis. Gordon raises important questions on an important subject and answers them with imagination, subtlety, and insight—all based on a thorough mastery of the sources." —*Robert Soucy, Professor of History, Oberlin College*

## COLLABORATIONISM IN FRANCE DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

By BERTRAM M. GORDON

At bookstores or from  
CORNELL UNIVERSITY PRESS  
815 House, 37 Dover Street  
London, W1X 4HQ  
or  
P.O. Box 250, Ithaca,  
New York 14850

# The not so sedulous ape

Thomas A. Sebeok

FRANCINE PATTERSON and  
EUGENE LINDEN

*The Education of Koko*  
224pp. Deutsch. £7.95.  
0 233 97431 8

*The Education of Koko* belongs to a still growing genre of literary discourse devoted to "language-endowed" apes. This is encountered in three main though overlapping types (excluding books written for children, such as the outstanding series by Bettyann Kevles): avouched works of fiction, which, in their striving for realism, more or less cunningly interface the researched with the fabricated; accounts advertised as documentary, but which are, more often than not, peppered with invented data, repeatedly informed of Koko's information, embroidered by cute illustrations throughout, and embellished with overpainted interpretations overall; and the interesting but rather uncommon third category of true confessions. Considered as fiction, the Patterson-Linden book measures up to neither of two recent novels about signing gorillas: John Goulter's brilliantly poetic roman à clef, *The Human Ape* (originally, *Oh's Profile*), or Michael Crichton's elaborately pseudo-factual thriller, *Congo*, the anthropoid heroine of which was loosely fashioned after Koko (TLR, July 17, 1981).

Proposed as a transcription of reality, the memoirs of Koko rate far beneath the trio of classics, all recording business consummated before 1950, by Nadie Ladygina Kohns (*Infant Ape*), *Human Child* (Winthrop N. and Louise A. Kellogg), *The Ape and the Child* (Catherine H. Hayes (*The Ape in our House*)). This book completes a new troika of captive Great Ape sagas, arguably accomplishing for Gorilla what Maurice K. Temerlin achieved, in 1975, for Pan (in *Lucy*, the name of a chimpanzee now out on parole in Gambia), and Keith Ladler, in 1980, for Pongo (in *The Talking Ape*). One salient feature these three recent books share is the crudely anthropopathic character of their respective protagonists.

All six of the chronicles I have mentioned, as well as Ann J. Premack's *Why Chimps Can Read*, differ from the third type of the genre, so far uniquely exemplified by Herbert S. Terrace's *Nim* (the name of another chimpanzee, lately downgraded to a laboratory subject for tests of a new hepatitis vaccine), with its volta-face conclusion that there is no evidence at all that apes can either generate or interpret sentences. This hardly surprising resolution earned Terrace such epithets as "muddle-headed" (Patterson), "apostate" (Linden), and worse. Terrace's results are, however, in perfect conformity with the long-held judgment of informed linguists, from Max Müller (1889) to Noam Chomsky. They accord equally well with the view of responsible ethologists, such as Konrad Lorenz, who declared, in 1978, "that syntactic language is based on a phylogenetic program evolved exclusively by humans," and that anthropoid apes "give no indication of possessing syntactic language." The eminent Bristol neuropsychologist, Richard Gregory, also concluded, in 1981, that apes do not exhibit either "human language or intellectual ability," and wisely admonished: "There are so many experimental difficulties and possibilities of the animals picking up clues from the experimenters, given unwittingly, that extreme caution is essential." Gregory is, of course, alluding here to the Clever Hans phenomenon, a fallacy by which Koko's entire ten-year curriculum has been arrantly tag-ridden; and writing specifically about Koko, Heidi Hediger, the most astute animal behaviourist of our times, observed, in his latest book, "Es ist... meine Überzeugung, dass in diesen Experimenten der Kluge-Hans-Fehler nach 75 Jahren erneut 'Triumphiert'."

Readers acquainted with *The Education of Henry Adams* might be tempted to leap to the conclusion that

*The Education of Koko* is a numinously endowed gorilla's autobiography, but the ability of Koko to express language in written form is not as yet included among the several other bizarre claims made on her behalf. But please don't scoff: in 1988, one of Thomas Mann's daughters, Elizabeth Borgese, advanced, in all seriousness, the even more outlandish proposition that her dog, Arli, learned to compose poetry on an Olivetti typewriter; of this English setter's work, a well-known critic of modern poetry had purportedly written: "—the poems are charming. I think he has definite affinity with the 'concretist' groups in Brazil, Scotland, and Germany. Has he been in touch with them?" (A specimen of this last group, "do sva," has been interpreted as an anti-war poem.) Since we are repeatedly informed of Koko's predilection for versifying, does it seem unreasonable to expect her to transmute her alleged talent for rhyming (on the order of "You lip slip" and "bread red head") into parallelisms, not just in evanescent gestures (ie, Ameslan), but in the more enduring visual mode, of script?

Apart from Koko's alleged poetic gifts, much is made of her aptitude for lying, which, according to the authors, "of course, is one of those behaviours that shows the power of language". Here, however, lurks a terminological confusion, one that, furthermore, begs the question. Many kinds of animals—the most remarkable case on record is that of the Arctic fox, *Alopex lagopus*—give, or give off, deceptive messages, in a word, prevaricate. But a lie must, by definition, be "stated", which Koko simply cannot do.

Since, as Philip Lieberman has cogently argued, non-human primates "could not produce human speech even if they had the neural devices", how, precisely, can Koko be said to talk? Well, she is declared to be "adept at typing" on a keyboard-computer assembly linked to a voice synthesizer by pressing buttons on a sturdy console. It is with genuine regret that one learns, however, that since the "synthesizer" has frequently malfunctioned, and although we have

collected an enormous amount of data, we have not yet had time to analyse Koko's "spoken" language in detail". (In plain text, this citation means that, since Miss Patterson's connections with Stanford University has been severed, she no longer enjoys free access to its computers.)

The first person singular narrator of this book represents a coalescence of two humans into a single persona: Francine Patterson, a tongue-tied psychologist, Koko's surrogate mother and pedagogue, whose voice — considering her confession that she felt that her time "would be much better spent conversing with the gorillas" — is ventriloquially articulated by Eugene Linden, a wrestler-turned-journalist, perhaps best known to the public for his *Apes, Men, & Language* (1974, 1981), surely the most glib, as well as defensively emotion-laden, popular account of attempts at linguistic communication with any of our collateral ancestral species so far published (particularly when contrasted with the much more sophisticated and fairly balanced report by Adrian Desmond, *The Ape's Reflexion* (1979)), and even in comparison with Ted Cral's *Apespeak & Whalespeak* (1981), which whiffles away, trying to offend no one).

A quotation attributed to Koko epigraphically opens the book, and, at the very same time, epitomizes its obstinate dotness: "Fine animal gorilla" — this being her reply to the question, "Are you an animal or a person?" This exchange implies that Koko rediscovered the Linnaean system of classification and nomenclature. To the contrary, as Hediger has patiently explained, the string quoted is a purely human product that having been fed to the gorilla was regurgitated by her, and then reinterpreted as a novel sentence that seemingly originated in her mind. It is a typical illustration of what happens when the Pathetic Fallacy and Clever Hans fallacy cross-fertilize one another, and the resulting hybrid is further contaminated by what the psychologist Paul E. Muhl, in 1956, and many others since, have dubbed the Barnum Fallacy — a phrase

## River

Springs of course high up, skittering out from innumerable rifled ridgedloads of virgin timber yet unspotted by woodchippers on the new make, it skirts the ruined vineyards which met phylloxera and came a cropper, sandstone, brown clay, Murray Greys browsing, winds past medical ranches to scrubby suburbs of mudbrick, Volvos and odd literati hoarding their dirt roads, soon slowly weaves into upper-middle Christendom, and vigorous E. coli, tram, bus and steel bridge salute it, golf, kayaki, the halo of truck tyres, a sluggish unuber, it quits the palazzi of education and reform for factories in rusty reef stored up by protection, fashions tooting through the city and real oriental ships wearing its bottom on top as the northern joke says, trying not to be poetical, this is the Yarra, Strimaina, streak from the Yarra-Yarra by linguistic diminution and colling at last, sandstone into the sea or a gaudy metal key to a rippled fashion of dying.

Chris Wallace-Crabbe

## Nomadic assets

Peter Lienhardt

WILLIAM LANCASTER

*The Rwala Bedouin Today*  
189pp. Cambridge University Press.  
£17.50.  
0 521 23877 3

This perceptive and informative book is the result of almost four years' work among the Rwala bedouin, that enormous tribal group which spread over southern Syria, eastern Jordan, the borders of Iraq and the northern desert of Saudi Arabia. The Rwala were the subject of the pioneering researches of the geographer and orientalist Musil, and comparisons with his work add historical depth to William Lancaster's analysis.

Since Musil's time much has changed. Principally, motor transport has reduced the economic value of camels and the military power of bedouin political groups. It has even altered the possibilities of grazing: Lancaster mentions a startling occasion when 90,000 head of sheep were brought in by lorry from all parts of Jordan to take advantage of (and ruin) a particular bedouin grazing area. In Saudi Arabia, the bedouin are compensated with considerable amounts of money paid out as social welfare and encouraged by generous subsidies to settle and cultivate. But the group Lancaster studied practised self-help by acquiring their own motor transport and engaging in large-scale smuggling.

In his study of the present-day Rwala, Lancaster acknowledges the anthropological influence of Frederik

Barth. He explains that he has concentrated, not on "institutions", but on "processes", approached through the study of "micro-reality". What this amounts to is the study of not so much people's generalizations about what they do — the ostensible social and political system they formulate — as what they actually do in numerous individual cases and situations. Things regarded piecemeal by the people themselves as exceptions to a rule, may prove in the aggregate to bulk so large as to demand a reformulation in which the rule becomes no more than part of the data. Again under Barth's influence, Lancaster proceeds to consider his data in terms of "assets" (including social assets such as marriage connections) and "options".

Choice is not determined by the institution of the patrilineal genealogy, although it will probably be used to "explain" the choice to an outsider. A closer look at the "explanation" reveals its weaknesses and a closer look at micro-reality shows that practical considerations lead to the use of all sorts of relationships, which are seen and used as assets giving access to a wider variety of options than would otherwise have been the case.

This approach will be familiar to anthropologists. It may be thought to prejudice and over-simplify the complexities of human motivation, by an obsession with personal advantage. In Lancaster's case, however, it has led him to a lot of highly interesting and original information.

As far as the Rwala sheikhs are concerned, it is a problem how to reconcile the appearance of strict authority with the egalitarianism of Rwala society. After quoting

## In strict seclusion

Ahdaf Soueif

UNNI WIKAN

*Behind the Veil in Arabia: Women in Oman*  
314pp. Johns Hopkins University Press. £15.  
0 8018 2729 9

NAILA MINAI

*Women in Islam: Tradition and Transition in the Middle East*  
283pp. John Murray. £8.95.  
0 7195 3882 3

WIEBKE WALTHER

*Women in Islam*  
204pp. With illustrations. George Prior. £17.50.  
0 86043 554 7

While writing this book, I was often frustrated, feeling that I was pulled in two opposed and irreconcilable directions. On the one hand, I wanted to describe life in Sohar, merely to render what I saw and heard, while leaving the reader free to make his own reflections. On the other hand, I wanted to "explain" this life... It has been a battle between the commonsensical and the anthropological parts of myself and the end product may be something of a monster: a book too academic from the general reader's point of view and too disorganized and "superficial" from the anthropologist's point of view.

"Monster" may, perhaps, be too harsh a word to describe the outcome of Unni Wikan's investigation of the condition of women in Sohar (a town in north Oman) but one must admit that she is right to have qualms about her relationship with her "material". Certainly on the human, as opposed to the anthropological level (assuming that these levels are in fact quite separate), there is a crippling uneasiness in her approach. Throughout the book, she finds it hard to let the facts speak for themselves — every human manifestation has to be equipped with its "scientific" underpinning. The effect is that the women of Sohar are never really allowed to come to life. Whenever we

draw near to seeing them as individual personalities, the author introduces with an explanation a categorization, a well-meaning gloss.

But then, I am not sure that Miss Wikan has a great deal of faith in her readers' ability to travel this remote territory without step-by-step assistance from an expert guide. She rarely trusts us to detect parallels, draw conclusions, etc. for ourselves, or even to remember some piece of basic information from one page to the next. Such helpfulness tends to clog the narrative, and it certainly levels out any shades of subtleties. In the end, it prohibits us from any close imaginative involvement with the women of Sohar.

This is not to say that we are given too little description of Sohar life. On the contrary, details are missed out that no writer of fiction could ever hope to get away with. One particularly striking example is "The Case of Melmona": Melmona is a fourteen-year-old girl whose father suddenly decides to marry her to a respectable and well-off suitor. Both Melmona and her mother are distressed, the mother because she had hoped that her daughter might marry her cousin — who has already asked for her and been turned down by the father on account of his "disposition".

Melmona's distress, we are told, is simply the distress felt by every girl faced with the prospect of leaving her home and her mother. Melmona marries the man chosen by her father, but on her wedding-night turns out to be a "woman" (ie, not a virgin). This occurrence, although not rare, is infrequent enough to entail disgrace and scandal. Indeed, the groom gets a refund of half the bride-price. And here the story, as told by the anthropologist, ends. The analysis which follows, enquires into the motives of fathers in choosing one particular suitor over another, and questions the methodology used to determine these motives. But the dozen or so real-life questions provoked by the story of Melmona are totally ignored. For instance who took Melmona's virginity? Could it have been her "disolute" cousin? Did the mother know? And was that an added reason for her distress? Surely now we can see that Melmona's distress was not merely the conventional emotion it was thought to be. Was it, totally

unthinkable that mother and daughter should confide in the father and thus avert the public shaming of the family? These, surely, are the questions that matter, the real avenues into the life and culture of our "characters".

In spite of such limitations, Miss Wikan does provide insights into the real position of these secluded and segregated women (that is, their position as perceived by themselves); their view of the veil, the degree to which they actually do influence their own lives and the lives of their men, their conception of "honour", their attitude to education and so on. All this is interesting and valuable. It is only a pity that with her curiosity, sympathy and meticulousness, the author could not also have allowed both herself and her reader a little more room for the imagination.

Naïla Minai has taken on a daunting task in her *Women in Islam*. She aims to provide not only a history of Muslim women from the time of Muhammad (610 AD) to the present day, but also to grapple with the ideological complexities that have resulted from the confrontation between the newly rediscovered Islamic liberalism on the one hand and the rising tide of neo-fundamentalism on the other. Such an undertaking necessitates that she move swiftly, and from time to time superficially, but her manner is engaging: she treats us as if we were willing, none-too-bright, students, but a compensation here is that she rarely lets us drift off into boredom; interesting miniatures and cameos abound and survey-style generalizations are nicely held in check.

Wiebke Walther's approach to this now favoured topic is much more within the classic tradition of Orientalism. Most of the material is derived from Islamic literature and the book is full of translated quotations from Arabic and Persian poetry. The beautiful production — lavishly with illuminated manuscripts, illustrations of ceramics, jewelry, costume, etc — need not blind us to the solidity of Mr Walther's research and documentation. Our wishes, however, that people (Mr Walther included) would stop referring to Islam as "Mohammedanism" and would learn to spell Muhammad's name with an "s" and not a "c".

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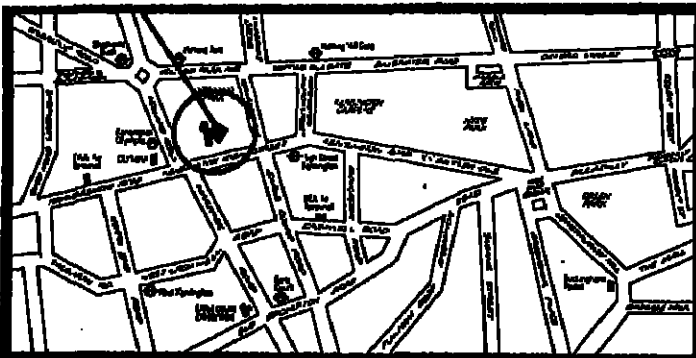
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The way of *infatih*

Roger Owen

MARK N. COOPER

The Transformation of Egypt  
278pp. Croom Helm. £13.95.  
0 7099 0721 4

The main outlines of the period of rapid change in Egypt's economic and political system usually associated with the name of "infatih" or liberalization are quite well known. They include the opening-up of a strongly centralized economy to private and foreign investment and the transformation of an authoritarian single party régime to one with a limited number of competing parties. It is also well known that the economic and social—not to say personal and psychological—stresses and strains accompanying these changes produced a whole gamut of violent reactions, from the riots of January 1977 to the unprecedented religious tensions which surfaced just before President Sadat's assassination.

And yet, for all its interest and importance, the details of this process have not been described in any work in English, nor its dynamic satisfactorily explained. As a rule it is associated simply with the transition from Nasser to Sadat and, in particular, with the latter's desire to solve Egypt's chronic economic problems with a combination of Arab oil money and American financial and diplomatic support. From this point of view the role of parties and Parliamentary activity often gets reduced to some sort of democratic window-dressing for what was basically the pursuit of an elusive economic miracle.

For Mark Cooper, however, *The Transformation of Egypt* is to be explained mainly in terms of a domestic political dynamic. He begins his story with the economic crisis of the mid-1960s, followed immediately by his comprehensive defeat in the 1967 war. The problems this posed not only stimulated an energetic political debate but also encouraged President Nasser to make a number of concessions to private economic activity as well as to attempt to redefine the relationship between the régime, the Arab Socialist Union and the popularly elected National Assembly.

## A form of aspiration

Robin Ostle

ROGER ALLEN

The Arabic Novel: An Historical and Critical Introduction  
181pp. Manchester University Press.  
£5.07/7885 0 3

In 1913 modern Arabic literature gained its own version of *La Nouvelle Heloise* when the Egyptian author Muhammad Husayn Haykal published *Zaynab*, a novel which was to play a major part in the establishment in the Arab World of this most supple and diverse of all the literary categories. It was somehow appropriate that this non-indigenous form should seek to express the dreams and aspirations of the new bourgeoisie who were to embark on the so-called "liberal experiment" in Egypt between the two world wars. It was an age of boundless enthusiasms and limitless horizons when the key to progress seemed to lie in the ideas, institutions, and educational systems of the European liberal democracies.

The history of the novel in its Arab environment has often seemed as painful and uneasy as those political and cultural forms which accompanied it from Western Europe. It reached a high point in the first phase of its development just at the time when the "liberal experiment" was in its final unyielding stages of political failure, works such as *Midnight in the East* (1946-47) by Louis 'Abid, and the "Cairo" novel of Nu'aym al-Muhit (1946) and *Midnight in the East* (1947) by Nu'aym al-Muhit.

The same process was continued after Nasser's death but with a new impetus of its own. Cooper's detailed examination of the period of intense political activity in 1971 and 1972 provides ample evidence of how important interest groups used the breathing-space provided by a relatively untried President to expand the role of institutions like the Assembly which they themselves hoped to control. He also demonstrates how Sadat himself both encouraged this process and was carried along by it in his search for a solid political constituency. Cooper is equally good in his analysis of the same type of process which took place between 1974 and 1976 when the renewed debate about the future of the ASU took on something of a life of its own leading to the creation of three "platforms" representing the Left, the Right and the Centre. Once again, Sadat often seems to have been left behind by this process until, with the emergence of the Centre as the dominant political force, he found what, from his point of view, was an ideal way to control the legislature with none of the disadvantages of the old ASU.

Cooper's approach has the great advantage that he sees politics not just as a scramble for power or the interplay of cliques and factions, but as resting on the competition of identifiable groups with recognizable interests. Among many other things this allows him much greater subtlety than most political sociologists in his examination of the way in which new ideologies develop to become powerful forces in their own right (for example the increasingly tight identification of "infatih" with individual rights), and of the possibilities open to political actors in situations where roles and relationships are being constantly redefined. The result is certainly the most balanced evaluation so far of Egypt's liberalizing experiment in which, in his judgment, the small advances in the freedom to think and to act politically were offset, and then completely overshadowed, by the failure to make any real dent in the uncontrolled exercise of executive authority.

Cooper's work is also remarkable in that it shows how much can be learned about the dynamics of political power in a still secretive system by an examination of such accessible data as

changes in the source of laws and decrees presented to the legislature. His method is particularly well deployed to illustrate the speed and skill with which President Sadat secured his own position against the challenge of powerful opponents in May 1971. Unfortunately the price paid for this type of analysis is a sterile multiplication of charts and tables, which are often no more than an elaborate restatement of the obvious, as well as the use of unnecessary jargon.

Paradoxically, Cooper's method makes the history of Egyptian politics both richer and somehow less exciting. For all his talk of the importance of executive power, the personality of President Sadat sinks into virtual insignificance. He also has no way of capturing the symbolic and emotional importance of such gestures as Sadat's destruction of the Secret Police in 1971. More important, for all the skill with which he tries to show the interaction between economic and political interests in the late 1960s, he does not carry this through into the early 1970s, particularly with regard to the various types of forces to be found on the right of the political spectrum and the extent to which their push for reduction in economic controls, the amendment of the Land Reform and the development of a legal system which protected private property against the state involved them in different strategies and relationships. Moreover, Cooper fails to note the enormous importance attached to the elaboration of a system of rules and regulations governing the exercise of ownership and control over private and semi-private organizations with among many other things, he rocketed lawyers back to their pre-Revolutionary eminence as the main intermediaries between people of property and the government.

Such trends would have become rather more obvious if Cooper had continued his analysis beyond the turbulent year of 1977. It would have forced him into a less wholehearted condemnation of the economic failure of "infatih" by encouraging him to respond to the political ramifications of the period of rapid growth in 1978 and 1979, when money from oil and from the remittances of the more than a million Egyptians working abroad produced huge new investments and vast new distortions.

Implications of these constant pressures for the future of a literary form which, in its golden age of nineteenth-century Europe, seemed to depend strongly on the capacity of individuals to respond positively to self-confidence in the face of the circumstances even when they were unsuccessful at determining their destinies. Just occasionally Allen suggests rich critical revelations, when he refers to Abd al-Rahman Munif's novel *Endings* as "not a novel of individuals, but of a community's constant struggle with the forces of nature"; the subsequent analysis, however, lacks deviance.

The chapter devoted to "literary analysis" of a selection of eight novels written within the last twenty years is also disappointing. While some of Allen's treatments of the chosen novels are critically more informative than others, in most cases extensive paraphrase of the plots is accompanied by relatively little sustained literary criticism. At the beginning of the passage devoted to *Endings*, Allen refers to recent structuralist analysis of pre-Islamic and medieval Arabic poetry which he thinks might be helpful in the discussion of this novel. While he does illustrate its formal similarities to some of the poetry, his analysis has little to do with structuralist techniques.

Reservations apart, this is a volume, to be added to the increasing numbers of other worthy studies on the subject which is too important to be left to Arabists whose translations, to the show little literary creativity, devote more attention to Arabic literature only when they have more translations which reflect the power and intensity of the original creation.

## The unincorporate society

P. J. Vatikiotis

CARL F. PETRY

The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages  
475pp. Princeton University Press.  
£25.80.  
0 691 053 294

GABRIEL BAER

Fellah and Townsman in the Middle East: Studies in Social History  
338pp. Frank Cass. £22.50.  
0 7146 3126 4

ROBERT SPRINGBORG

Family Power and Politics in Egypt  
297pp. University of Pennsylvania Press. £18.75.  
0 8122 7835 6

The study of that curious caste of slave warriors from the Caucasus and Central Asia, who founded the Mamluk dynasties in Egypt (1260-1517), and defended the dominion of Islam against Crusader and Mongol-Tatar invaders from West and East respectively, has attracted generations of scholars. Carl Petry, however, in *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages* attempts, perhaps for the first time, to reconstruct a picture of the civilian elite which served these rulers: executive administrators, accountants, tax collectors, secretaries, jurists, religious teachers and functionaries. The relation between military (Mamluk) ruler-patron and civilian bureaucrat-client has long been known to scholars. What Petry does in this sensible study is to examine one critical period in the later Middle Ages and document it in a monograph.

Since the Mamluk institution was based on a caste of slave warriors, tension and factionalism engendered endemic internal strife. The whole system of power, concentrated as it was in Cairo, was precarious and volatile. There was no rural aristocracy to counter or balance this essentially military ruling institution. A combination of ambition and force was the passport to power. Not only ruling, but any state official remained precarious. While the rulers remained separate from the subjects, their relation to their civilian officials was one of convenience. The latter were wholly dependent on the Mamluk emirs, and they survived in office only so long as they benefited their patrons. In doing so, however, they could and did improve their own material condition and social status. This patron-client relationship, as well as poor economic conditions in the country, especially in the fifteenth century, hampered the effective operation of the bureaucracy, staffed as it was mainly by ulama (men learned in the religious law and sciences).

Petry describes the civilian elite as a religious-academic. In discussing its features, functions and organization, he seeks to establish its geographical origins and explain why more of them came from or concentrated in certain urban centres. He finds both internal and external reasons for the movements of this vast number of literate Muslims to Mamluk Cairo from Syria, Iran, Anatolia and North Africa. Economic and cultural conditions in the countryside throughout the Islamic world were not conducive to the life of a religious scholar. Moreover, the seat of power was exclusively in a few cities and, in the case of Mamluk Egypt, in Cairo. The eastern lands especially, the external threat of invasion and devastation led many of these learned men seeking state office to move to more stable environments.

By the fifteenth century, a cosmopolitan Islamic bureaucratic "class" had converged on Mamluk Cairo. It was, according to Petry, a "learned class with common values deriving from religious consensus and the uniform training of its members." The bureaucrats, among them, were collectors, archivists and revenue officers who became clients of Mamluk patrons. As such, their relationship was symbiotic and therefore ephemeral: they did not

enjoy any autonomy. The jurists, on the other hand, enjoyed great moral authority but could hardly influence society beyond maintaining the orthodoxy of the faith. Religious functionaries, more remote from central authority and more widely dispersed among the lower classes in town and country, were the least powerful but at the same time had the most influence with the people. They offered the masses a basis of social cohesiveness, comfort in the face of adversity, a sense of community and permanence so as to be able to endure the oppressiveness of the Mamluk régime.

The picture that emerges is of a civilian elite who were "servants" of the rulers, not wielders of any power. They could neither eliminate oppression nor alter the political order in any fundamental way. Authority and power remained concentrated at the top; none of it was granted through charter, even though its exercise could be delegated from above for specific purposes. The political order was essentially characterized by grades of subordination in an unincorporate society, lacking all forms of distribution of power among institutions other than the ruling military élite.

The unincorporate nature of society is further illustrated in Gabriel Baer's *Fellah and Townsman in the Middle East*, whose main theme is the rural-urban dichotomy which results from the cultural, economic and political gulf separating peasant from townsman. Consisting of a collection of essays (most of them published previously), the volume treats the problem of village and city in Egypt and Syria from the Ottoman occupation to the twentieth century, the structure and functions of Turkish guilds, and peasant rebellions. It is a logical sequel to Professor Baer's earlier collection of essays, *Studies in the Social History of Egypt*, and his other works on landownership and the guilds in Egypt.

Like Petry, Baer emphasizes the city as the exclusive administrative centre and seat of power: "No one belonging to the ruling institution ever lived in the village." Similarly, all institutions of learning were concentrated in the city. But, unlike Petry, he gives reasons for the lack of urbanization, especially in the seventeenth century. Using a little known seventeenth-century satirical work by an Egyptian, al-Shirbini, Baer develops the sources of conflict between fellah and townsman. He rejects the argument put forward recently by Ira Lapidus to the contrary by insisting that the rural-urban dichotomy was and remains sharp. The cosmopolitanism of the town, even in the seventeenth century (comprising rulers, ulama, merchants and people of different cultural backgrounds) was in stark contrast to the village or province. He is particularly good on the weak economic connection between town and village where, until the nineteenth century, there were hardly any landowners and where no commerce was conducted. Rural, urban trade also suffered because of poor communications and lack of security. Even the sole administrative link between town and village, the tax-farmer, lived in the city. Official guardians of religious orthodoxy, moreover, left the countryside to the less orthodox sufi brotherhoods.

Baer's and Petry's books are complementary in one significant respect. Village and town were not and are not integrated into an interlocking social body. The absence of rural notables who can challenge the rule of the city is paralleled by the lack of a corporate urban society with an independent administration. Urban struggles may have been rare, but so have been alliances between rural and urban societies against the central power.

Paradoxically, the urban-rural dichotomy grew with nineteenth-century modernization, even though the shift to a cash-crop agriculture established stronger connections between village and urban merchants and financial institutions, while the expansion of transport led to the rise of provincial towns. However, modern education, health services, and administrative structures tend to be concentrated in the city, thus widening the cultural gap between town and



A twentieth-century lion rug from the Fars province of Iran: an illustration from *Oriental Rugs: Care and Repair* by Majid Amini (128pp. Orbis. £10. 0 85615 293 4).

country. Large-scale migration from village to town in the twentieth century did not lead to effective urbanization but to the ruralization of cities. In short, the lack of a country-based gentry and urban bourgeoisie thwarted the rise of a corporate society. Even the rise of landownership in the mid-nineteenth century, and the decline of the guilds later did not help. The one simply resulted in landowners living in the city, and the other opened up a free labour market to peasants migrating to the town. Since modernization meant greater centralization, the net effect was greater control of the country by the city. Even in Syria and southern Palestine, where rural lords lived and dominated parts of the countryside from where they could clash with the city, new forms of taxation and greater centralization diminished their influence. In fact, stronger central government undermined all local autonomy.

Instances of urban revolt and rural rebellion further support the thesis of an unincorporate society. In the town, it was usually the poorer strata of society rebelling against famine or oppressive taxation, or over sectarian differences. Their leaders were not from the upper reaches of the ulama (these always supported established power) but from among the lower ranks of religious functionaries. In the countryside, peasants rebelled against taxation, conscription and forced labour, and usually when central government was weak as in the last years of Muhammad Ali's reign (1846-49), during political turmoil (1877-82) and after natural disasters ranging from drought to epidemics and famine. Significantly, these rebellions had no ideological or social direction: they were never aimed at changing the government or ruler, but only against a particular policy. Professor Baer singles out one important exception, the 1858 Kiswa rebellion in Lebanon which smacked of class conflict. However the 1919 revolt in Egypt, the 1925 rebellion in Syria and the 1936 revolt in Palestine were national uprisings: the political objectives of which were set by urban politicians.

In the absence of a class of wealthy or even landowning middle peasants, a strong central government was able to localize rural rebellions. The urban-rural link forged in 1919 against Britain in Egypt was transient and based on disparate motives. The new class of wealthy landowners instead established strong economic and political links with the city to become the new political élite. It was not until the 1950s that inequities in land ownership became the source of rural unrest, and even then a city élite introduced measures of land reform.

Robert Springborg's study of one Egyptian family, the Mareis of Azziza in the Delta, further corroborates the domination of the village by the city, emphasized by Petry and Baer. He argues that in such a society, the attainment of state or political power is a prerequisite of the acquisition of wealth and not the other way round. Upward mobility is via movement to the city, where secular education and

graduating class) and the patron-client relations these can establish and promote.

*Family Power and Politics*, however, does not explain why one can still count on one's relatives, why so much importance is still attached to landownership, why the family is still "the preeminent network" for economic opportunities, or why allegiance to the family takes precedence over larger, impersonal institutions. There are also several errors, such as King Hussein of Jordan's first wife being named as "Dunya" instead of "Dina" Glancles, the famous wine grower in Egypt, becoming "Glancles" Ibrahim Abdel Hady, Prime Minister in 1948-49, being described as plain "Ibrahim Hady", Wing Commander Hasan Ibrahim as a lieutenant-colonel, and Shams Bidran, Minister of War, as "Al-Furqan Chief".

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Virginites

248pp. Hutchinson. £7.95.  
0 09 147710 7

Growing up in London has always been a chancy business. The heat of life in the capital quickly expands physical and emotional energies which are not easily released without danger to passers-by. In 1943 and 1944, the years covered by *Virginites*, German bombs and V-5 offered further stimulus, and are among the factors that help to animate the unnamed adolescent hero of Robert Muller's novel.

The "secret diaries" of which *Virginites* is composed reveal a scuttling time-bomb of frustrated sexual desire and grandiose literary ambitions (to serve as deputy film critic to Ernest Betts on the *Daily Express*) who has exchanged a promising role as Crouch End Grammar's brightest pupil for that of editorial office-boy with *Feetures*, a novel and picture agency near Soho Square. Home is Sunnyside Road, N8 (nearest Tube shelter: Archway), where the narrator gloomily endures the mumbled confidences of Dad, who works in Simpsons' bespoke tailoring department, and displays a healthy appetite for Mum's Woolton-inspired squirrel pie.

Sunnyside Road can be no more

than a short bicycle ride from The Laurels, Holloway, residence of the most notable of London fictional diarists. Like the Grossmiths, Muller plunges his arms up to the elbow in the riches of London lower-middle-class life and comes up with a novelist's ransom of character and incident, throwing off an eerie gleam of dreamy strivings, dashed hopes, and compulsive deceancies. But here the view is Lupin's, not Charles's. Chippy London knowings, though, thanks to Hollywood and Crouch End Grammar, has taken on a more recognizably modern look. The narrator's mind is a yeasty mix of half-baked tastes and ideas which Muller, opening the oven door halfway through the cooking, reveals with hilarious accuracy. The ingredients include novels: Mann, Maugham, Dostoevsky, Sidney Horler, *A Journey of Dust* ("One of Miss Waugh's better efforts"; modern plays, "(favourite: Keith Winter's *The Rat of Norway*"); music, with "Chattanooga Choo-Choo" breasting the tape ahead of Beethoven's Fifth; and above all films.

After lunch to Tivoli for Fritz Lang's *Hangmen Also Die* (Cyril's H. H. idol, Brecht, has allegedly written script). Queues stretch round block, so make do with *Casablanca* at Regal, Marble Arch. Pure corn, saved by Conrad Veldt and Peter Lorre.

Short, bespectacled, shamefully advised by Mum over Chinese lunch in Wardour Street "to wash down there".

The diarist fills his pages with a candid record of his disastrous sex life. Singlemindedly, he inches towards his objective of shedding his virginity before he is called up, or nurse or cinema usherette he has temporarily fantasized into inevitable collapse. Unsurprisingly, the petals close up as the girls sulkily agree to yet another film-buffs' treat at the Vogue, Tooting, followed by the park. Confronted by more willing partners, such as the spotty but plump Ruth, lately attached to his best friend Cyril (now metamorphosing from Left Book Club stalwart to hero of Biggin Hill) or the mock-genteel grass-widowed Mrs Raftery, the narrator predictably makes a run for it, laying down a smokescreen of principle to cover his flight. Such rationalizations, though, quickly vanish beneath his own comic self-scrutiny and that of his friend Ferene, a Central European refugee (long since, at the age of fourteen, put out of his misery by the family chambermaid), who plunges the narrator's head into icy Freudian water.

Muller's account of the stringencies of lower-middle-class adolescence forty years ago is both true and funny: the tone of the diaries exactly reproduces the plaintive disharmony of quick-witted facetiousness and melancholy characteristic of many young Londoners of the period. This wartime sound was made up of many clashing phrases: Left Book Club pieties, stylized metropolitan cynicism,

the romantic fantasies of Hollywood, the daily dangers from flying bombs and the inexorable approach of military service (although it is worth noting that at this stage of the war, direction into the mines was regarded as the worse fate; it was unheroic and, worse, cast the conscript back into the working class from which the family might only recently have escaped.)

But *Virginites* is as much a lovingly assembled scrapbook of this particular stratum of wartime London as it is a comedy of growing up. Guy Crouchback and X. Trappel are in another part of town; even Hooper would have shone at the Featurex office parties. Muller rightly stresses the importance of orchestral concerts to Londoners during these years, with Basil Cameron and Shulamith Shafir

and Sidney Beer thundering from Weber's *Oberon* overture and Beethoven's Seventh and Ninth concertos. Symphonies; while the entertainment there was cheap television cinema, with its minor-garfield pantheon of stars from Garfield to Ralph Bellamy, to be worshipped if needs be at such shrines as the Empire State, Kiffers, or the Majestic, Mitcham, with the chance of an air-raid to lighten the outing. Heady times, which Muller recaptures with affection and scrupulous attention to detail (although it was "coughs and sneezes" not "colds and sneezes", that spread diseases). London bus-watchers note with interest in the novel the sighting of a Number 19, a species which, though still officially listed, is thought to be extinct.

## Planetary designs

Colin Greenland

IAN WATSON

Sunstroke and Other Stories  
190pp. Gollancz. £7.95.  
0 573 03138 7

Albert Einstein declared that God does not play dice with the cosmos. Ian Watson suggests that He may nevertheless play snooker with it, a game in which the factor of chance is concatenated from the first shot, rather than isolated in discrete throws. Alternatively, God may supervise the universe like a film editor, cutting out the unnecessary bits. Or he may dwell in the "multiverse", the chaotic set of all possible universes, waiting for the single moment of creation when life will bind time, forward and back, into "fierce deterministic causality".

The occupation of God is of interest to many science fiction writers. Some acquire a sort of fellow-feeling for the Creator from their mutual duties in the business of planetary design. Other more abstract intelligences, such as Watson's, often have to account for the deity because they use science fiction as a species of philosophical inquiry. Their perpetual redefinition of known and assumed conditions entails frequent glimpses of what the absolute might be. Watson even has the temerity to dictate, in the first person singular, "A Letter from God" - the snooker story - which, while allowing Opponent too, still manages to leave a vast gap between God and terrestrial life - the only life in this particular universe and something of a fluke shot in the game.

Similarly, in "The Milk of Knowledge" the multiverse story, human consciousness is the only thing that gives the cosmos form, the form of causality, and therefore meaning. Watson likes to single out humanity in his speculations. In "Peace" human colonialism triggers the first extraterrestrial war by demanding a treaty; humanity is the only species that needs to remind itself that all beings are brothers. In "Bud" Earth is the only planet with life-forms that do not reproduce sexually. These distinctions, express Watson's conviction that unknown reality is more likely to contradict the known than reproduce it. It might be argued that this is the only viable belief for a science fiction writer if his stars are not to become suburbs, but contradiction, opinions in conflict, is Watson's forte and his principal mode of narration.

Many of his stories are debates on the move. "Peace" is an argument between the Jewish colony director and his deputy, an Arab social engineer, about the mores of the atom. "Bud" is almost entirely composed of cross-talk between a human and an alien. "The Disagreement" is an inter-species dialogue about aesthetics. "Flame and the Healer" is a spoken re-evaluation of a dream of the "Inventive". "Returning Home" is a complete anti-personnel atomic weapons with a bomb that destroys only property and places the naked

survivors of attack by the second country depopulated by the first, to investigate what it is that culture inheres in. Watson is concerned with such generalities, topics for discussion rather than details. His characters are not couples, or families, or close collections of strangers, but professional teams working on projects, a time-travel experimenting TV programme. Their names, conscientious mixtures of Yulko, Loh and Emil with Natasha, Sigrid and Hans, convey the fact that they are individuals, but representing viewpoints, a think-tank convened to explore an issue or two.

Watson's prose contains much talking, less listening; a good deal of thought, but very little observation. The result is a self-explanatory fiction, a series of proficently executed diagrams construed for the satisfaction of the mind rather than the mind's eye. The exceptions here are notable. "The Pump Room with Jane" is a description, including some delightful Austen pastiche, of Bath in a different history, overcome by drought, which may be the delusion of one Jane Elton, inmate of the Bath. "The Road to Paradise" recounts the travels of Robert Fitzgerald, a subject of artificial reincarnation who wakes up in an afterlife consisting of a series of unoccupied rooms. Infinite and inscrutable. When Watson cheats the intellect and satisfies a visionary impulse, he has some fascinating enigmas to offer.

JOHN PEARSON

The Kindness of Dr Avicenna  
244pp. Macmillan. £6.50.  
0 333 33118 4

Moreton, the Rome representative of a London insurance broker, is approached by the comic but clever Dr Avicenna, who wants to arrange a policy - with a kidnap ransom clause - on the life of the Prince of Wales. Stefano, an ageing Italian playboy, complications naturally ensue. Involving terrorists, Moreton's young and attractive wife, and a couple of investigators sent out from the local office in London. A beautifully written and neatly plotted work. The Italian background is excellent, and Dr Avicenna a creation worthy of E. E. Amdler.

CRAIG THOMAS

Jade Tiger  
326pp. Michael Joseph. £7.95.  
0 7181 2130 9

Russia and West Germany are about to conclude a treaty that will do much to ease the tensions between the Berlin Wall and lead to the reunification of Germany. But the intelligence begins to suspect that the German politician behind the negotiations is a Soviet agent. A subtle, complicated plot with a cast list and a cast of characters, a subtle and sophisticated narrative. A cast list and a cast of characters, a subtle and sophisticated narrative. A cast list and a cast of characters, a subtle and sophisticated narrative.

HISTORY

## By process of elimination

Robert M. Adams

NORBERT ELIAS

State Formation and Civilization  
376pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £19.50.  
0 631 19680 3

Norbert Elias's account of "The Civilizing Process" proceeds on its majestic way. This reviewer noticed in the TLS of September 15, 1978 a first volume, *The History of Manners*; the second volume, titled *State Formation and Civilization*, is before us now; we seem to be promised three more. "The Court Society", "Involvement and Detachment", and (with Eric Dunning) "Quest for Excitement".

Readers of the first volume will not find a great deal changed in the circumstances of the second. It too was originally published at Basel in 1939, and has been translated into a contorted social-science dialect based upon English; it too carefully avoids any allusion to work less than forty-five years old. It too undertakes to combine history, sociology, and psychology in a synoptic vision of the long process by which modern man achieved, for better or worse, his present state of "civilization". An unwelcome and remarkable change is that the first volume was priced at £8.50; for the second, the price-tag is £19.50. If we advance at this rate through the next three volumes, "Quest for Excitement" will be beyond the reach of anyone but a syndicate.

In line with positions previously assumed, Elias does not in this volume put much stock in ideas, ideologies, or conscious programmes of reform as agents of civilization. Rather, he sees

civilization developing out of social conflicts and complications - lengthening chains of processing and distribution - which require greater foresight and more strict controls, until, without anyone foreseeing or very much wanting it, civilization gradually replaces a condition of disorder and local violence. Rather more frequently in this volume than in the previous one, he speaks of the social change as the operation of a mechanism. Indeed, the first and larger part of the present volume is entirely devoted to explaining the mechanism by which a loosely integrated feudal society (his primary example is France) gave way to a centralized, absolutist, court-centred society. For its first 225 pages the book pursues this topic in relative isolation from the theme of changing manners; the last hundred or so pages describe the replacement of the "free knight" ethos - frank, violent, predatory - with that of the supple, polished, impenetrable courtier. By and large, Elias sees as the motive agent of this change a process of attrition. Competing knights, competing families, competing districts and coalitions of interest gradually eliminate one another till a single successful survivor becomes absolute monarch. Within his court, and in response to the directives of his double monopoly (of force and finances, the army and taxation), a code of "civilized" manners develops.

The first part of this argument will not strike anyone as a crashing novelty. Elimination contests were, and still are, natural preliminaries to the establishment of a supreme authority. The rise of Marie de France and the abolitionist movement in the nineteenth century, it is impossible to review the history of slavery in the West without recognizing the part played in

with numerous repetitions, through the convolutions of an extraordinarily cumbersome dialect; a reader's patience will be put to the test. On the other hand, the fractious reader may, in the intervals of his impatience, wonder about some other anomalies of the civilizing process. Why is it, he could ask, that sixteenth-century Italy, where no automatic monopoly of power ever developed - where, on the contrary, the fragmented city-states and the *condottieri* sustaining them were never even threatened with any sort of centralization - why did this society become the master of civilized manners and courtly behaviour to all Europe? No doubt there is an answer to this question, perhaps several answers; but as Elias never admits power to his book, the reader must contemplate both query and response on his own.

Again, one cannot quarrel with the basic notion that the civilizing process was a consequence of "sociogenic" forces: widespread and almost intangible forces imperfectly understood by and not necessarily agreeable to the men and women on whom they bore. One can explain in the same way religious toleration, two-party politics, and a great many other contemporary practices - they arose from changes in the pattern of social behaviour. But that programmatic idealism had nothing whatever to do with the civilizing process seems an extreme position. A crucial instance might be found in slavery and the attitude towards it of the Christian churches. From St Wulfstan in the eleventh century to William Wilberforce and the American abolitionist movement in the nineteenth century, it is impossible to review the history of slavery in the West without recognizing the part played in

its abolition by the Christian churches. No doubt their efforts were rendered more or less effective by social forces outside their control and partly outside their ken; changing modes of organizing labour, different market conditions, altered tensions between classes intent on pursuing their own interests - all played a part. But that the leadership of the churches across the centuries can be wholly disregarded is preposterous. And that there must be some change in the manners of civilized people when their fellow-creatures are no longer treated unquestioningly as chattels must also appear likely.

A traditional view lays great stress, in the development of civilized manners, on the change in the status of women implicit in the mode of courtly love. Elias will have none of this; indeed, he suggests that the codes of chivalry were known only to a few exceptional men, and constituted for them mostly remote ideals to which they paid little more than lip-service. Knights and even kings sometimes assaulted their wives; they dismissed them with contempt when "serious" matters came up for discussion. Perhaps so; there are some passages in the life of Sir Thomas Malory (if indeed the author of the *Morte d'Arthur* was the man he seems to have been) which suggest that he was very far from the irreproachable chevalier he held up as a role model in his book. On the other hand, rough manners and contempt for women hardly belong in the world of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, a poem written far from any court, and in a dialect unknown to most courtiers. The life of Marie de France and the *Parzival* of Wolfram von Eschenbach present the same ideals, and by no means in a way that suggests nobody was expected to follow them. In Book III of the latter poem, one notes particularly the earnest advice given the hero by Gurnemanz de Graharz: it begins by explicitly inculcating a sense of shame and ends with praise of "moderation" within a framework of married love. Both elements occur here about seven centuries too early, according to the time-scale implied by Elias's "mechanism".

Still, over the long centuries, and after innumerable vicissitudes, the influence of local conditions, temporary fluctuations, and wavering human intentions, Elias is surely right that the code of modern manners derives major sustenance from increasing division of labour, lengthening chains of social and economic interdependence, and the consequent requirement that individuals exercise more foresight, more circumspection, and more restraint over their appetites. Many of these considerations, to be sure, seem likely to bear more directly on members of the commercial and industrial classes than on kings and courtiers; another aspect of the civilizing process that Elias does not mention is the long search for substitute activities to keep the turbulent gentry from their favourite activity, fighting. Crusades, pilgrimages, hunting, tournaments, games, masques, ceremonies, and of course travel all offer, in different forms and to different degrees, moral equivalents to war; so, one supposes, do the mimic campaigns of business enterprise and commercial accumulation. Elias makes much of the suave, calculating mind of the devious courtier who can doubt that if we knew as much of the inner thoughts of Sir George Downing or John Baron Somerset, plebeian as their origins were, we should find them equally canny, equally calculating. In the history of civilized manners, it's a long step forward when men turn from open mayhem to covert guile and sly deceit. But of course this is still "civilization" only by courtesy, and with a great many reservations. Urbane hypocrites who hide their predatory appetites behind the forms of good manners are bound to distinguish, if we can, from people whose sense of courtesy is disinterested and uncalculating. The long historical scale to which "The Civilizing Process" is constructed does not very often encourage its author to probe intimate complexities - for

militancy and quietism in the early Quakers, or the foreshadowings of cultural relativism to be sensed even in such a primitive fabrication as *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*. Awareness of the individual conscience in its erected dignity and of many moral codes other than one's own - those can hardly have failed to enter the mix of restraint and awareness, of complacency and deference, that we call, all too loosely, civilization.

To what extent does the change documented by Elias correspond with or lead into that defined by David Riesman as the move from outer-directed to inner-directed personalities? The correspondence seems so palpable, one would like to see it defined, limited perhaps - at any rate acknowledged. From there one might pass to the two opposed definitions of religion, as a guide to be followed or a rule to be interpreted, and the personality-types corresponding to each. But that would be another book; the metaphor of the mechanism seems to have discouraged Elias from any such diversionary excursions. He appears to view history as a single process proceeding inexorably in a single direction. Smaller units of local force invariably eliminate one another and are absorbed into larger districts, then into unified and coercive nations; nations are absorbed into wider and more compelling alliances, till ultimately the whole world will be dominated by a single power-monopoly enforcing a single code of values and manners - to the extinction, evidently, of all variety and freedom. Presumably at that point history will come to a stop, or wind off on another, quite unpredictable, gyre.

That discouraging prospect, however, is found mainly and not categorically on two pages (320 and 321) of *State Formation and Civilization*; elsewhere it appears that the mechanism is not utterly inexorable in its operation - that, in fact, monopolies occasionally disintegrate as well as coalesce. Such might be our commonsense opinion after reviewing the record of a few historical empires - from China, let's say, to Peru. It's a rather liberating possibility, raising agreeable questions about the total predictability of the mechanism which, for reasons not distinctly contemplated by the historian, can run, now forwards, now backwards. Perhaps history contains more free variables than ruthless eliminatory competition. Perhaps, if that is the case, it leads to happier conclusions than an ever-widening, ever more oppressive monopoly of physical and moral power - power to which, rather than "civilization", one is tempted to attach the very different name of "Kultur". But that's another word which is hardly spoken, another concept dismissed, another set of complex problems barely adumbrated by this vast yet somehow blinkered study.

The book remains, as I implied in connection with the first volume, ambitious and thought-provoking; it also remains, partly as a result of its method, more as a result of its prose, very heavy going indeed. A sentence from page 311 is more strained syntactically than the average, but not untypical in the amount of shrinkage required to get it down to size:

The strength of the social constraints, and the many contradictions within it, to which the behaviour of each individual member of the upper class and the establishment is subject and which are represented by his own "super-go", are not determined solely by the fact that it is a control exerted by competitors, some of them even in free competition, but above all by the fact that the competing members of the established groups at the same time have to make common cause to preserve their distinguishing prestige and their higher status from those pressing from below - still more or less as outsiders.

In a later volume, we are told, "the Quest for Excitement" will be discussed; if the quest leads through many blemishes of this order, there will be a strong temptation to settle for excitement of a less comforted and less characterful kind.

## Intruding on the UWCs

Linda Taylor

RAY SALISBURY

Close the Door Behind You  
234pp. André Deutsch. £7.95.  
0 235 97469 5

It might have been better if Grandad had died. The trouble is that no one seems to realize that he's going to have a heart attack. You couldn't expect the naive narrator, Simon, to understand (he is, or was, only four), but what do Nan and Mum and Dad think they're up to ignoring the symptoms of doubled-up pains in the tummy (a euphemism for the chest) and persistently telling poor Grandad that

he's got a chill or indigestion?

Their blindness, though, is symptomatic of their condition: upper working classism. The UWCs are a funny breed. They live in the suburbs or in the corners of little market towns, they work hard at boring clerical jobs, they are housebound (can be roused to fury by marks on the wallpaper and so on), snobbish (especially about "nasty" people, or UWCs), like things to be neat and tidy (hence the title of Ray Salisbury's first novel) and want their children to "get on" - the sights are set on something vaguely professional, via a college education. It's a tight-lipped, stifling world where the men are impotent and the women cross their legs.

Ray Salisbury's particular set of

UWCs inhabit, in the 1940s, one of those villages just outside a town (Chichester) with mushrooming council estates. Simon has begun to learn the rules: there are a lot of them. His youth gives him the advantage, as narrator, of observing like an intruder the life of his family without bearing the responsibility for its code of practice. He can't even be disillusioned - that, we hope, will come later. There's a problem here, though, of credibility. Though the perspective is a four-year-old's, the first-person narrator is in the past tense, as if Simon is now a grown-up. But the prose is still babyish, full of simplistic images and words like "p'raps"; the dichotomy between authorial knowledge and childish vocabulary jars.

Salisbury does, though, have a facility for getting the child's sentiments exactly right: "I knew what she'd said", thinks Simon when his mother has warned him against going off with the workmen, "but I didn't know what she meant." Salisbury's other forte is the horrible accuracy of his UWCs' banal conversation. He can't, however, be forgiven for peppering Simon's family's speech with every clichéd UWC expetitive under the sun. Perhaps they do say "cor lumme" and "blimey bill" and "good blimey" and "stone me" and "sawth and bugger" and "blessed" all the time near Chichester, though they didn't where I came from.

Simon, meanwhile, is so busy learning the rules (on colouring in, for example, "You can't give him red colour if you've already started to colour his coat red") that he doesn't have much time for the internal world of childhood passion. Grandad does his best to provide this by taking Simon off to the woods where they suck Fox's glacier mints, and by introducing him to books - though Simon's list of favourites is a little suspect. Did he really understand *David Copperfield*, *Robinson Crusoe* and *The Christmas Carol* UWC precociously, perhaps?

Another problem is that Ray Salisbury enjoyed his upbringing far too much (he grew up and lives in Sussex). The tone is nostalgic rather than implicitly condemnatory, and he's writing a sequel in which he sends the family clear the table, lay into the hope for their sake that Grandad and his final heart attack soon and that Simon rapidly wins a place at Eton. Though clear he's heading straight for Essex and the Civil Service.

## Real Magic

Claire Duchen

GWYNETH CRAVENS

Love and Work  
342pp. Hamish Hamilton. £7.95.  
0 241 10866 7

In spite of the title, Gwyneth Cravens's novel is more about love than work - or, more precisely, about the illusions of love. The perfect affair of Angela and Joe is hotly anticipated by both, but it eludes them. They are so caught up in their fantasies about each other that the reality cannot, and does not, match.

Angela meets her new boss Joe Bly (director of an executive newsletter) and decides at the interview that he is Mr. Absolutely Right. She sets out to win him, by being the opposite of Edith, the abortion clinic director Joe lives with. And it works - at first. For Joe, Edith is real, and they have a relationship that they are "seriously working at". Angela, on the other hand, is magic, and he dreams of being a magician with her. For Angela, Joe is a total obsession. But then Joe dithers, Angela doesn't insist, and the affair loses momentum. Somehow the careful planning, the seductive settings and tactics, and the anticipation of reactions are frustrated by every turn of events, and neither of them quite understands why. Joe dithers himself into marriage and parenthood with

Edith; Angela meets a man who makes her laugh and with whom she forgets to pretend. The inexplicable magic that Joe and Angela feel for each other has died, and at their final chance meeting, they barely recognize each other.

Joe and Angela are not the only ones obsessed by love: everyone is, except Katha, the 'ai chi expert who has reconciled herself to life and death. Sharon, Derek Granger and Ron Nussbaum the poet, like Woody Allen's neurotic New Yorkers, think of little other than the measurement of their emotions; the potential of their relationships and their analysts' insights.

New York City and the details of young, middle-class professional life provide the setting - which rings true, from the apartments with Eames chairs and exposed brick walls to the psycho-babble ("Edith and I may have reached a new level I want to explore"), from the preparation of zabaglione to the summer weekends in the Hamptons.

The affair of Joe and Angela, is recounted with a light touch; when they are together, their meetings are seen from both points of view, when apart, their infatuation feeds on fantasy. It is the disparity between their experiences of the same situation, the juxtaposition of the magic and mundanity of their feelings, and Gwyneth Cravens's ability to surprise the reader that create the vein of sardonic humour running through the novel.